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SAMUEL JOHNSON



Samuel Johnson

By
Lord Macaulay

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARIES, &c.,

BY

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Virgil's 'Aeneid I. and VI.,' Goethe's 'Iphigenie,' Boswell's 'Tour,'
'Extracts from the Nibelungenlied,' etc.

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PREFACE.

IT in no wise detracts from the value of Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* as an artistic composition, and it adds of course to its value as a trustworthy account, that it is, so to speak, a mosaic composed almost entirely of fragments of earlier biographies, every fragment, of whatever form or hue, being fitted in with extraordinary skill and delicately adjusted into harmony with the rest.

Nearly every statement and many of the comments and opinions that Macaulay here offers us may be traced back to passages in the writings of Boswell, Madame Piozzi, Sir John Hawkins, Murphy, Malone, or some other contemporary of Johnson. Sometimes—indeed, not seldom—a sentence or a paragraph is transported intact, or with slight modification, from one of these writers; and in many cases a sentence or a paragraph consists of various fragments taken from various passages of the same writer, or from different writers. The book from which Macaulay mainly draws is, of course, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*; and a leisured person with no higher literary interests might find a not altogether contemptible pastime in working through Boswell's book in Dr. Hill's labyrinthine edition, using Macaulay's brilliant résumé as a clue. But Boswell's

Life is very long—nigh 700 two-columned pages of text in the Globe edition—and the time at the disposal of most readers, whether or not doomed to examination, is limited, and in any case can be spent far better than in hunting up hundreds of passages lurking in all kinds of obscure hiding places in Dr. Hill's five thick volumes—a most wearisome task, even when undertaken with the help of an Index of more than 300 pages.

To save the examinee such profitless expense of time and labour is one object of the present edition. I have therefore added reference to almost every quotation from Boswell's *Life* (Globe edition), from his *Tour* (my edition in 'English Classics'), from Dr. Hill's annotations and appendices, from Macaulay's collected *Essays* (Longman's popular edition), and from his *Essay on Boswell's Johnson* (edited by Mr. Winch in 'English Classics'). But another and more important object that I had in view was to interest the reader in the subject. I have therefore given a considerable amount of illustration, mostly in the form of quotation or of what seemed to me apt and interesting information; for I am quite sure that, although from one point of view notes may be (as Johnson calls them) necessary evils, the matter is not bettered by joining in any such silly cry as: 'the fewer and shorter the notes the better.' It is not the fewness nor the shortness of the notes that proves the efficiency of an editor and aids the young reader to appreciate and love what is great and beautiful in literature; it is the nature of the notes.¹ If notes (to quote Matthew

¹ Those critics whose commendation rises and falls in inverse ratio to the length and shortness of an editor's annotations, must find it difficult to express their intense approbation of Matthew

Arnold) are 'pedantic, obscure, dull—everything that bores, rather than everything that stimulates—' then the less of them the better: but if they are apt and interesting, and do not (to quote Matthew Arnold once more) insist on being received along with the text, or—what is, alas, sometimes the case—*instead* of the text,¹ then there is no danger that the reader will be 'distracted and rebutted.' On the contrary, he will be attracted, and his interest will be deepened and confirmed.

I have avoided philological and grammatical disquisitions, for I do not think that what has any claim to the name of literature should be used as a peg for such things. The one important object of annotation in the case of literature, as it seems to me, is to help the reader to understand and enjoy the writer's message—*not* to parse and derive his words, analyse his periods, and prate about metonymy, hendiadys, and oxymorons. By putting literature to such uses we make young people hate what they would naturally love. I know some such who, though full of appreciation for what is great and beautiful, cannot endure to be reminded of plays of Shakespeare and poems of Milton in which they have been examined.

That one should now and then frankly and strongly express one's convictions in regard to what is great and true, and what is the reverse, in literature, and place in

Arnold's notes on our present text. They consist of not quite ten and a half lines, *i.e.* about two lines a piece, on *Politian*, *Ben Jonson*, *Malone*, *Windham*, *Fr. Burney*.

¹ Such notes are mostly due to the absurd character of many of our examinations. I have known cases where high marks have been obtained by candidates who crammed up notes, and never even read through the text.

the proper light the ridiculous statements of faddists—such, for instance, as the assertion that Johnson and Boswell were as great as Socrates and Plato—can do nothing but good. Perfectly neutral and colourless comment is dull and uninspiring. But I do not think that the annotator of the works of great writers for educational purposes should encourage in young people the attitude of critical pedantry. (Alas, how often he abets the examiner in *compelling* such attitude!) In the present case, anyhow, it would be an impertinence, in both senses of the word, to offer any formal critique, and to inform the student or the ‘general reader,’ what he or she should definitely and finally opine on the defects or excellencies of Johnson’s, Boswell’s, or Macaulay’s style. Many very competent judges have discussed these matters, and in case it should seem really advisable, after forming one’s own opinion by a study of the originals, to see what these literary adepts have to say, their books will be easily procured from libraries or booksellers. Those that I should recommend for these and better purposes are: *Samuel Johnson*, by Sir Leslie Stephen (‘English Men of Letters’); *Macaulay’s Essay on Boswell’s Johnson* (‘English Classics’); *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and his Critics*, by Dr. Birbeck Hill; *Carlyle’s Hero as Man of Letters; Introduction*, by Mr. Mowbray Morris (Boswell’s *Life*, Globe edition); *Preface to Johnson’s* (six) *Lives*, by Matthew Arnold (Macmillan); *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, by Sir G. Trevelyan (Longman, 2s. 6d.); *Macaulay*, by J. C. Morison (‘English Men of Letters’).

For a sketch of the life of Boswell, I may perhaps refer to my edition of Boswell’s *Tour to the Hebrides*

(‘English Classics’). The quotations from Johnson’s *Dictionary* are from the edition of 1786, once more kindly put at my disposal by the Rev. A. V. Carden, of Clarens.

I am indebted for a good deal of interesting information on several rather obscure points to my friends A. H. Leaf and Mrs. Leaf of Oxted, T. W. Rolleston of Dublin, and Edward Carpenter.

H. B. C.

CHÂTEAU-D’OEX,
March, 1904.

INTRODUCTION.

IN December 1855 appeared the second instalment of Macaulay's *History of England from the accession of James II.* The success of these third and fourth volumes outrivalled even that of the first two. As regards bulk of printed matter and financial results, such success had never been attained by any edition of any work in any country. The twenty-five thousand copies of which the edition consisted—fifty-six tons in weight—were all ordered before the day of publication, and within a few weeks a cheque for £20,000 was handed over to the author by the publishers—‘a fact,’ says Macaulay, ‘quite unprecedented in the history of the book trade.’

But this success had been dearly bought. From the summer of 1854 until the autumn of 1855 his *History* had been, as he describes it in the preface to his collected *Speeches*, the one business and pleasure of his life. He had worked, says Sir G. Trevelyan, harder and ever harder. ‘He had gone to his daily labours without intermission and without reluctance, until his allotted task had been accomplished. . . . His labour, though a labour of love, was immense. He almost gave

up letter-writing ; he quite gave up society : and at last he had not leisure even for his diary.'

How severe had been the strain on his enfeebled health is evident from the fact that, whereas on every former occasion the termination of any such task had been the signal for the commencement of another, 'in 1856 summer succeeded to spring and gave place to autumn, before he again took pen in hand.' His diary, moreover, at this period gives many signs of failing vigour. He constantly speaks of his health as confining him to his room, and as 'very indifferent.' In spite of his courage, there is a tone of anxiety and foreboding. 'I have no pain,' he writes. 'My faculties are unimpaired. My spirits are very seldom depressed, and I am not without hopes of being set up again.'

This same year (1856) saw two important changes in Macaulay's external life, both caused by his need of rest. In January he resigned his seat for Edinburgh, feeling that he could no longer 'reasonably expect to be ever again capable of performing, even in an imperfect manner, those duties which the public has a right to expect from every member of the House of Commons'; and in May he gave up his rooms in the 'Albany,' where he had resided for fifteen years, and retired to a little house with a garden (Holly Lodge), in a quiet part of Campden Hill.

In the late summer of this year (1856) he was in Italy—at Milan, Verona, and Venice—where he found much to interest him in pictures, architecture, antiquities, and Italian literature. It was scarcely a rest from intellectual activity, but was, at least, a complete change ; and he seems to have so far regained his vigour

of mind that soon after his return to England he made a serious attempt to set to work at the continuation of his history. On the first of October 1856 he entered this note in his diary : 'Wrote a sheet of foolscap—the first of Part iii. God knows whether I shall ever finish that part. I begin it with little heart or hope.'

The attempt, made with such effort and such foreboding, was short-lived. Again and again he set to work, and ever again the pen fell, as it were, from his weary hand. 'I find it difficult,' he says in February of 1857, 'to settle to my work. This is an old malady of mine. . . . Of late I have felt this impotence more than usual. The chief reason, I believe, is the great doubt which I feel whether I shall live long enough to finish another volume of my book.' Month after month now passed by, and in the next summer (1857) we find this note : 'How the days steal away, and nothing done! I think often of Johnson's lamentations repeated every Easter over his own idleness. . . . Often have I felt this morbid incapacity to work, but never so long and so strong as of late ;—the natural effect of age and ease.'

Then during a short period he appears to have made a little progress with the book. On July 14th he notes that he 'wrote a good deal' on the Darien affair of 1699. 'The humour,' he says, 'has returned, and I shall woo it to continue.'

But it was not easy to woo. Gradually and unwillingly, says Sir G. Trevelyan, Macaulay 'acquiesced in the conviction that he must submit to leave untold that very portion of English history which he was competent to treat as no man again will treat it.' Instead of

extending his *History*, as he had at first intended, to the accession of William the Fourth, he began to realise that he might be 'well content to be assured that he would live to carry it down to the death of his hero, William of Orange.' He had no longer, he said, 'any real expectation of ever being able to even get to the Georges.'

This foreboding was fulfilled. He read much and planned much. He travelled, abroad and in Scotland. He even spoke once in public—at Cambridge, where he had been elected High Steward—and he intended to speak, though he never did speak, in the House of Lords, after taking his seat as peer. But that which had once been the 'business and pleasure of his life,' was put aside from day to day and from month to month. Now and then, indeed, during the brief remainder of his life he added a few pages to his great work, but not only did he fail to get so far as to the Georges; he did not reach even the death of William of Orange and the reign of Queen Anne. Just a fortnight before his death (December, 1859) he made this entry in his diary: 'Finished at last the session of 1699-1700.' Two days later great weakness supervened, caused by heart failure, and on December the 28th he died.

I have given this slight outline of the last four years of Macaulay's life, because it was during this period that he wrote the *Life of Johnson*, and some of the facts that I have mentioned go far, I think, to explain not only the revival of his interest in the subject, but also the very striking difference, both in spirit and in language, between the former *Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson* and this later *Samuel Johnson*—a difference which distinguishes him who in the heyday of intellectual self-

reliance revels in vivid effects from him for whom all things 'do take a sober colouring from an eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.' By its simpler, stronger, and more dignified language, and by its far wider and deeper sympathies, this later work seems to illustrate well the rather sad words that we find noted in Macaulay's diary not many months before his death : 'Alas, how short life, and how long art ! I feel as if I had but just begun to understand how to write ; and the probability is that I have very nearly done writing.' Literary production was almost at a stand-still during the last three or four years, but Macaulay read a great deal—although, doubtless, not so omnivorously and insatiably as in earlier years—and, as was natural, much that he read was in anticipation of the still hoped-for, though scarce expected, time when he should arrive at those periods which he had already mapped out for treatment in his *History*. The writings of Swift, Defoe, Bentley, Atterbury, Addison, Steele, Pope, Bolingbroke, Berkeley, and other authors of that age, were known to him as perhaps they have been known to no one else, and his intimacy with the political events of the period was such that (as Boswell said of Johnson and the *Lives of the Poets*) he would have had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper. But it was not only the last years of William and the reign of Anne which engaged his interest. In spite of all forebodings, he seems to have looked still farther forward, and to have read and digested much that had connexion with the Georgian era. Hence it is not surprising that almost the only literary work that he produced during these last few years of his life were monographs most of

which related to this era ; namely, the Lives of Atterbury, Bunyan, Johnson, Goldsmith, and William Pitt.

These *Lives* were written for the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Sir G. Trevelyan quotes from Mr. Adam Black, the then publisher of the *Encyclopaedia*, as follows : ‘ He had ceased to write for the reviews or other periodicals, though often earnestly solicited to do so. It is entirely to his friendly feeling that I am indebted for these literary gems, which could not have been purchased with money ; and it is but justice to his memory that I should record, as one of the many instances of the kindness and generosity of his heart, that he made it a stipulation of his contributing to the *Encyclopaedia*, that remuneration should not be so much as mentioned.’

About none of the *Lives* does Sir G. Trevelyan give us any further information, except about the last, that of William Pitt. This work, which fills about seventy octavo pages, was in hand for three quarters of a year, *i.e.*, from November 1857, when Macaulay noted in his diary that ‘ the plan of a good character of Pitt was forming in his mind,’ until the 9th of August 1858, when he made this entry : ‘ I finished and sent off the paper which has caused me so much trouble. I began it, I see, in last November. What a time to have been dawdling over such a trifle !’

These biographical sketches were (as Messrs. Black kindly inform me) supplied in alphabetical order ; so the *Samuel Johnson* was most probably written in 1856.

Sir G. Trevelyan remarks that the conscientious and unsparing industry of Macaulay’s former days brought him this inestimable reward—that the quality of his

productions remained the same as ever, in spite of the rapid decline in his physical strength. 'Instead of writing worse,' he says, 'Macaulay only wrote less.' Perhaps we may go further. Perhaps it may be safely asserted that, instead of writing worse, Macaulay wrote towards the end not only less, but also better. And this seems really Sir G. Trevelyan's opinion, although he applies to these 'literary gems' a rather strange standard of literary value when he says that 'the five little essays are everything which an article in an Encyclopaedia should be.' Surely they are something more than this.

'The reader,' he continues, 'as he travels softly and swiftly along, congratulates himself on having lighted upon what he regards as a most fascinating literary or political memoir; but the student, on a closer examination, discovers that every fact, and date, and circumstance is distinctly and faithfully recorded in its due chronological sequence. Macaulay's belief about himself as a writer was that he improved to the last; and the question of the superiority of his later over his earlier manner may securely be staked upon a comparison between the article on Johnson in the *Edinburgh Review* and the article on Johnson in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The latter of the two is indeed a model of that which its eminent subject¹ pronounced to be the essential qualification of a biographer—the art of writing trifles with dignity.'

¹ Dr. Hill (4. 34) quotes from Warner as follows: 'Mr. Fowke once observed to Dr. Johnson that, in his opinion, the Doctor's literary strength lay in writing biography, in which he infinitely exceeded all his contemporaries. "Sir," said Johnson, "I believe that is true. The dogs don't know how to write trifles with dignity."'

Although, as one of the most successful of biographers, Sir G. Trevelyan may be regarded as a very competent judge in such matters, as the nephew of Macaulay he might perhaps be suspected of partiality. But no one who remembers the exceedingly caustic criticisms passed by Matthew Arnold on the *Essay on Milton* and other of Macaulay's earlier productions, will accuse him of a perversion of judgment when he expresses warm admiration for this *Samuel Johnson* as a 'choice work of Lord Macaulay's—a work which shows him at his very best; a work written when his style was matured, and when his resources were in all their fulness.' So impressed, indeed, was Matthew Arnold with the literary value of this *Life of Johnson* that he was at some pains to secure permission to use it (the copyright not having yet expired) as a biographical introduction in his edition of six of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.

Anyone who carefully collates (as an editor must needs do) this work of Macaulay with the authorities from whom he derived his facts must be deeply impressed by his inexhaustible fund of information, and still more by the extraordinary skill with which he made use of his materials. But this *Samuel Johnson* is not merely a masterly abstract of Boswell's book; it is far more than the most skilfully fabricated patchwork; it possesses an organic structure and an independent vitality, such as are possessed by every true work of genius; it is the work of one who was to no small extent endowed with the creative power of an artist, and this it is that makes such writings so much more valuable educationally than the dull, unimaginative results of that 'higher' literary and historical criticism, of

which we are so ineffably conceited, and the very existence of which, as Mr. Morison sadly informs us, was totally ignored by Macaulay.

Even although we may have to admit that at times Macaulay's facts are somewhat loosely stated, and his views somewhat strongly coloured: even though he may at times make a 'serious reader,' such as Mr. Matthew Arnold, impatient by 'tickling his ears with fine rhetoric,' there can be no doubt that he has the power of drawing forth, often from apparently most arid places, that enthusiasm which is the spring of all true knowledge.

Not only was Macaulay, what he calls Goldsmith, 'a great, perhaps an unequalled, master of the arts of selection and condensation'; he was, as was also Goldsmith, a great deal more. He had that creative gift by means of which alone a writer can make the past live again for us, and without which even the most painfully accurate recapitulation of details and the most scrupulously colourless views of character are of no use except as material for the true historian.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political 10 sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September, 1709. In the child the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength, accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid pro- 20 pensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch was a specific for this

malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye ; and he saw but very imperfectly
10 with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity, that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge
20 in such a way ; but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek, for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist, and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan delicacy of taste, which is the boast of the great public schools of England, he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers, who were
30 quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity, and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as

much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined : his debts increased ; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either University ; but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance ; and, in reliance on 10 promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory, but not unprofitable, study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius ; and one of the most learned among them declared, that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments. 20

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness ; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity, which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door ; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and twenty, could have 30 treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendancy. In every mutiny against the discipline of the

college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's Messiah into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but 10 he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

20 His life, during the thirty years which followed was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving 30 felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner-table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and

perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy 10 took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death: and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct 20 line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium: they reached him refracted, dulled, and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him. ✓

With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birth-place and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. 30 He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronizing the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and

squalid garb moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar-school in Leicestershire ; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman ; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse : but subscriptions did not come in, and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces, which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted ; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners ; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he ex-

claimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away, and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his school-room must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty, well 10 qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair. —

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of Irene in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

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Never since literature became a calling in England had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation, a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the 30 least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public.

- One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author, whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose Seasons were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose Pasquin had had a greater run than any drama since *The Beggars' Opera*, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the
- 10 means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment, measured with a scornful eye that athletic, though uncouth, frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.
- 20 Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man, but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in
- 30 general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on six-pennyworth of meat and a pennyworth of bread at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently

under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shoes, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sate down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. / Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries and *à la mode* beefshops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged 10 himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him, would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to 20 abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the Gentleman's Magazine. That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom 30 which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called Reports of the Debates of the

Senate of Lilliput. France was Blefuscu: London was Mil-dendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac Secretary of State: Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad; and William Pulteney was Wingul Pul-nub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the Ministry and for the Opposition. He was himself a

10 Tory, not from rational conviction—for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another—but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues, or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much

20 respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest. Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything

30 indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of “the zealot of rebellion.” Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconsti-

tutional impost. Under a Government the mildest that had ever been known in the world—under a Government which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action—he fancied that he was a slave ; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stock-10 jobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments and Continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the Magazine. But Johnson long after- 20 wards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it ; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the Opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which 30 Juvenal has described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets that overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's Satires and Epistles had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope

had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's *London* appeared without his name in May, 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower
10 established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made enquiries about the author of *London*. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar-school for the poor
20 young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained a bookseller's back.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and indexmakers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with
30 his arms through two holes in his blankets; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober; and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk: Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after

poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted, was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribbons in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last 10 into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as 20 near as he could get to the furnace of a glass-house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of Opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the Prime Minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. 30 Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and

his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catch-penny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that
10 the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The Life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several
20 eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English Language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be
30 the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the

London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750 ; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though 10 lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned, too, that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short 20 of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles ; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

For the copyright of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor

10 was of a very singular kind. / They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive

20 vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathized with each other on so many points on which they sympathized with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the

30 master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought *Irene* out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened, with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited

to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* closely resemble the versification of *Irene*. The poet, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of *Irene*, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and 10 literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the *Tatler*, and by the still more brilliant success of the *Spectator*. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. The *Lay Monastery*, the *Censor*, the *Freethinker*, the *Plain Dealer*, the *Champion*, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the 20 thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the *Spectator* appeared the first number of the *Rambler*. From March 1750 to March 1752 this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first the *Rambler* was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the *Spectator*. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington, among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning 30 cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederick, two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing-office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been

very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the Rambler was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author
10 lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of
20 his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting
30 Club, the Dunmow Fitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last Rambler was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affections had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she 10 was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, or the judgment of the Monthly Review. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. 20 After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the Prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the Ramblers had ceased to appear, the 30 town had been entertained by a journal called the World, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of the World the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator,

may, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The Dictionary came forth without
10 a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's Dictionary was hailed with
20 an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers, are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language except English, which
30 indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from

the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names, and laid down their 10 money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the Literary Magazine. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled the Idler. During two years these 20 essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The Idler may be described as a second part of the Rambler, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his Idlers, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. 30 In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain, for the book was Rasselas.

The success of *Rasselas* was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volumes from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the Princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy.

10 The *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review* took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting-woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

20 About the plan of *Rasselas* little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. *Rasselas* and *Imlac*, *Nekayah* and *Pekuah*, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which *Imlac* describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of
30 the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from *Bruce's Travels*. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as

eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan, transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ballrooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home and dream 10 of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a 20 child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the 30 Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders.

George the Third had ascended the throne ; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends, and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters ; and Johnson was
10 one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's
20 officer.

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare ; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years ; and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort ; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed
30 fervently against his idleness ; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time ; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread

me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter 1765 came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself with some of his friends, at one in the 10 morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was 20 which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October 1765 appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he 30 had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic.

The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his Prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive, is indisputable.

- 10 But unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben. Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it
- 20 never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and
- 30 honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience, and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a

Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775, Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the *Life of Savage* and on *Rasselas*.

But, though his pen was not idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon 10 those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the *Rambler*. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in 20 *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might 30 have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage-coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-

house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the
10 service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were
20 two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of sub-
30 mitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who

was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, 10 either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitefield and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on John- 20 son. The pair might seem ill-matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as, "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water-drinker and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than a 30 habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to

worship the master : the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House in Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note-books with minutes of
10 what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those
20 clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson, and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilized society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes,
30 the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But

in a man of genius, learning, and virtue, their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes—abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called *the endearing elegance of female friendship*. Mrs. 10 Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise was wanting to his sick-room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more 20 flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names now obsolete, of Buck and Maccaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a 30 lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinach, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together: at the head of the establishment Johnson had

placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-
10 heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of
20 mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important
30 event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society, so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not

probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which 10 could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his *Journey to the Hebrides* was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and 20 more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure John- 30 son's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dis-

honourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blar-eyed ; another for being a pensioner ; a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose Fingal had been proved
10 in the Journey to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy ; and
20 he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry ; and when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him ; but not one of the hundred could boast of
30 having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicol, and Hendersons did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learn-

ing, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter :

Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum.

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them ; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain 10 to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttle-cock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the *Journey to the Hebrides*, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between 20 England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending ; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the Opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the Government ; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and 30 Stockdale. But his *Taxation No Tyranny* was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even

Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and the Rambler were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of a week, but because he had
10 foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother-country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as
20 Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter Eve 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much
30 civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly

from sources which had long been closed ; from old Grub Street traditions ; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults ; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button ; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists ; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift ; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended 10 to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The *Lives of the Poets* are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are 20 eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They, therefore, generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy ; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions. 30

Savage's *Life*, Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1774. Whoever, after reading that *Life*, will turn to the other *Lives* will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had

contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly ; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the *Journey to the Hebrides*, and in the *Lives of the Poets* is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, 10 that of Gray.

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure ; but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another 20 hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the *History of Charles V.* ; and it is no disrespect to the memory of 30 Robertson to say that the *History of Charles V.* is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the *Lives of the Poets*.

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him ; and his whole life was darkened by the

shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes 10 of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world, tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good-humour. But he 20 was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. 30 She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham; she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter

of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler ; that all London was crying shame upon her ; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron, and the two pictures in Hamlet. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had eased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his Idlers seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying ; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds,

the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard, and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the Government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year; but this hope was disappointed, and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, 10 urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham sate much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows and sent his own servant to watch at night by the bed. Frances Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified 20 him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he 30 had been the historian,—Cowley and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

Since his death the popularity of his works—the *Lives of the Poets*, and, perhaps, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, excepted—has greatly diminished. His *Dictionary* has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An

allusion to his Rambler or his Idler is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of *Rasselas* has grown somewhat dim. But though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with
10 the metal buttons, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

NOTES.

B. stands for the Globe edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

H. „ Dr. G. Birbeck Hill's edition in 6 volumes.

Tour or T. „ my edition of Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* in this Series.

'Milton' „ „ „ Macaulay's *Essay on Milton* in this Series.

Essay „ „ Mr. Winch's edition of Macaulay's *Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson* in this Series.

1. 2. **Michael Johnson**, born 1656. When 'well advanced in years' he married Sarah Ford, as Boswell states (B. 5), and as is proved by the following extract from the Register of Packwood, in Warwickshire: '1706. Mickell Johnsones of lichfield and Sara ford married June the 9th.' He was 'a pretty good Latin scholar and a citizen so creditable as to be made one of the magistrates of Lichfield' (B. 5). He was sheriff in 1709 and senior bailiff in 1725; and died 1731. Besides Samuel there was a younger son, Nathanael (B. 25), who died in 1737 (not 1727, as stated by a recent editor), in his 25th year (B. 5). About ten days before his own death (*i.e.* on 2nd December, 1784), Johnson sent to Lichfield three long Latin inscriptions (B. 678, H. 4. 393) in memory of his father, mother, and brother, to be engraved on a slab, which was to be placed in the middle aisle of St. Michael's Church. This slab seems (if ever laid) to have been removed during restorations in 1796, but a fresh slab with Johnson's inscriptions was laid at the centenary of his death. Of Johnson's mother Boswell speaks highly (B. 6) as 'a woman of distinguished understanding'; but Johnson himself in his *Autobiography* says: 'My father and mother had not much happiness from each other. They seldom conversed... Had my mother been more literate, they had made better companions.' [This *Autobiography*, also called *Annals*, is an *Account of the Life of Samuel Johnson, from his birth to his eleventh year, written by himself*, printed in 1805 by Richard Wright, a Lichfield surgeon, from MSS. secreted by Francis Barber, Johnson's negro

servant, when Johnson burnt 'large masses' of his papers a few days before his death. Boswell (B. 683) fancied that he had secured all that had escaped the flames, and lamented the loss of 'two quartos' of autobiography, which he had seen, and had felt much tempted to steal.]

1. 8. country rectors ... Macaulay derives this from a letter (by Lord Gower's chaplain, 1716), quoted by Boswell: 'Johnson, the Lichfield librarian, is now here. He propagates learning all over this diocese... All the clergy here are his pupils, and suck all they have from him' (B. 5 n).

1. 12. taking the oaths. 'He was a zealous high-church man and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate house of Stuart, though he reconciled himself by casuistical arguments ... to take the oaths imposed by the prevailing power' (B. 6. See also B. 292 and H. 2. 322 n). A **Jacobite** was one who did not accept the Revolution of 1688. [These were 'old Jacobites.' Others called themselves Jacobites who were rather Tories, and had accepted the succession of William and Mary and of Anne as Protestants.] All those who held office in Church or State were required to take oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance to William and Mary, and those who refused to do so (among them seven English bishops) were called *Non-jurors*. As to the honesty of taking the oaths while still remaining a Jacobite at heart, see Boswell *ad loc. cit.* Those who did not accept the Act of Settlement (by which, at Anne's death, the succession went to the Protestant house of Hanover) are also called *non-juring*; indeed this is the meaning of the word according to Johnson's *Dictionary*, in contradistinction to *non-juror*. See note on Toryism below, p. 10, l. 10.

1. 14. his house: at the corner of the Market place. In 1767 the lease of the ground, which belonged to the Corporation, was renewed for 99 years at 5s. yearly rent, without any request on the part of Dr. Johnson. In his will he ordered the house to be sold and the proceeds to be given to some of his relations (B. 669 n and 681 n).

1. 17. peculiarities. Those who wish for examples of these peculiarities should collate the very numerous passages in which Boswell describes Johnson's personal appearance, habits, eccentricities, prejudices, etc. These they will find in Dr. Hill's Index (vi. p. 137) or in that given in the Globe edition by Mr. Morris (p. 706). It would occupy far too much space if I were to try to illustrate everything that Macaulay says on such points.

1. 25. royal touch. It was believed that scrofulous tumours ('king's evil') could be cured by the touch of a duly anointed sovereign, or, as Jacobites asserted, a lineally descended possessor of the 'divine right,' even though not yet anointed. 'Old

Jacobites' maintained that the power had not descended to William and Mary, or Anne. Boswell remarked to Johnson that 'his mother had not carried him far enough; she should have carried him to Rome'—*i.e.* to the Pretender. (The Old Pretender took up residence in Rome rather later—after the rising of 1715.) The Hanoverian kings never 'touched.' 'Charles II., in the course of his reign, touched near a hundred thousand persons... The expense of the ceremony was little less than £10,000 a year' (Macaulay's *History*, ch. xiv.). 'It appears by the newspapers of the time that on March 30, 1712, two hundred persons were touched by Queen Anne' (Wright, quoted by Croker). One of these was evidently the baby Johnson. He was taken to London to be touched 'on the advice of the celebrated Sir John Floyer, then a physician in Lichfield' (B. 8)—a fact scarcely credible until we read of the not less absurd and far more dangerous bleedings and purgings and other such medical follies of that day. [Sir J. F. was, however, wise enough to be one of the first to advocate *cold baths*—the very thought of which made Johnson writhe. He 'detested immersion.'] Johnson's godfather, Dr. Swinfen, believed, probably with reason, that the scrofulous taint was contracted by the child from the wet nurse who suckled him. But see on p. 4, l. 27, below.

2. 2. **prayed over.** At the end of Charles the Second's reign (1684) a special form of prayer for the ceremony of the 'royal touch' was inserted in the Prayer Book. It was excised in 1719.

2. 3. **piece of gold.** In mediaeval alchemy there was supposed to be some mystic affinity between gold and life, as the highest products of the organic and inorganic worlds. (Cf. Virgil's living bough of gold.) A golden 'touch-piece' was coined by Charles II. The coin was worn as an amulet by the patient. Cf. *Macbeth*, iv. 3, where the English king of those times is described as healing 'the evil' by his touch and by 'hanging a golden stamp about their necks.' The 'touch-piece' which Johnson received from Queen Anne is said to be in the British Museum.

2. 9. **very imperfectly.** According to Boswell, Johnson's eyesight was much keener than was generally supposed. See B. 7 and 322. Of his 'bad' eye Johnson said to Dr. Burney: 'The dog was never good for much.' He was once much offended with Bishop Percy (B. 460) for calling him short-sighted, and (as Mrs. Thrale tells us) was indignant at Sir Joshua Reynolds for painting him as short-sighted—holding his pen close to his eye: 'He may paint himself deaf, if he chooses, but I will not be *blinking Sam!*' (H. 3. 273 *n*). Sir Joshua was deaf, and is represented in various pictures with his ear-trumpet or with his hand to his

ear. Cf. Goldsmith's line: 'He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.'

2. 12. **every school.** 'Dame Oliver' was his first teacher—a widow who kept a school for small children in Lichfield. 'When he was going to Oxford she brought him, in the simplicity of her kindness, a present of gingerbread, and said he was the best scholar she ever had.' Then, at Lichfield School he was two years under usher Hawkins, who (he says in his *Annals*) 'indulged and caressed' him, and then under headmaster Hunter, who 'beat him unmercifully.' But, 'abating his brutality,' Johnson regarded him as a good master, and attributed later his accurate knowledge of Latin to these whippings (B. 8, 9). At the age of fifteen (1725) he was sent to Stourbridge School (Worcestershire), where he seems to have 'acted in the capacity of assistant' to the headmaster, Wentworth. This school he left after about a year, and 'loitered' for two years at home 'in a state very unworthy his uncommon abilities' (B. 11).

2. 21. **little Greek.** What he read during these two years was (he said to Boswell) 'not voyages and travels, but all literature, sir—all ancient writers—though but little Greek; only some of Anacreon and Hesiod. But in this irregular manner I had looked into a great many books which were not commonly known at the Universities' (B. 13). Afterwards, at Oxford, 'what he read *solidly* was Greek' (B. 18). He was never a thorough Greek scholar such as his friend Langton. Boswell gives authorities to prove that Johnson, 'though not a great, was a good Greek scholar' (B. 674). His Greek 'tetrastick' on Goldsmith (B. 277) proves little either way. While at Stourbridge he translated into rather vigorous English verse a passage from Homer (B. 12).

2. 27. **Augustan.** The 'golden age' of Roman literature was the age of Augustus (roughly speaking, about 44 B.C. to 15 A.D.), when Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Livy flourished. (Cicero died 43 B.C.) Octavianus did not attain the title 'Augustus' till B.C. 27. 'Johnson,' says Macaulay in his *Essay on Milton*, 'had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.'

2. 32. **restorers of learning:** the scholars who during the 14th and 15th centuries prepared the way for the 'Renaissance' by reviving the study of ancient Roman and Greek literature and art.

2. 33. **Petrarch's works.** Johnson had seen Petrarch's name 'mentioned in some preface as one of the restorers of learning.' It was Petrarch's Latin works that he 'eagerly devoured,' as he

evidently did not yet know Italian.¹ Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) owes his chief celebrity to his Italian *Sonnets and Canzoni* on the life and death of Laura. But he wrote much also in Latin—philosophical and historical treatises (*De vita solitaria*, *De viris illustribus*, etc.), satires, orations, Eclogues, and Epics (e.g. the poem *Africa*, an epic in honour of Scipio Africanus). In Italian he also wrote semi-epical poems called *Trionfi* (The Triumphs of Love, Death, Time, etc.).

For his *Africa* he was crowned with the laurel wreath, as laureate, on the Capitol, and received an offer of the same honour from the University of Paris. Of his Latin the great scholar Erasmus says: 'He wants full acquaintance with the language.' Others have condemned it as 'scarcely bearing the character of Latinity.' Hallam says: 'His Latin poetry abounds with faults of metre.' In his *Criticism on Petrarch* (1824) Macaulay comments severely on the Latinity and the 'dreary obscurity' of the *Africa*, but praises Petrarch for having attempted to restore learning, and having 'gone on the forlorn hope of literature.'

3. 3. **irregularly educating himself.** Boswell's comment is here very Boswellian. 'The flesh of animals who feed excursively is allowed to have a higher flavour than that of those who are cooped up. May there not be the same difference between men who read as their taste prompts and men who are confined in cells and colleges to stated tasks?'

3. 10. **wealthy neighbour.** Croker thinks that this might have been Johnson's godfather, Dr. Swinfen, who seems to have been at Pembroke College in 1712. Boswell, however, was assured by Dr. Taylor (an old schoolmate of Johnson's) that it was 'a gentleman of Shropshire, one of his old schoolfellows,' and that he had 'spontaneously undertaken to support Johnson at Oxford in the character of his companion; though he never received any assistance whatever from that gentleman.' Sir John Hawkins (whose *Life of Johnson* was Boswell's special *bête noire*) gives Andrew Corbet as the name of this spontaneous but ineffective benefactor. Johnson was not, as Carlyle calls him, a 'rawboned college servitor'; he was a 'commoner,' not dependent on the foundation.

3. 10. **reliance on promises.** Possibly Johnson 'never received any assistance' because he treated the promises in the same fashion as the boots mentioned below.

3. 18. **Macrobius:** a Roman grammarian who (about 400 A.D.) wrote treatises on history, mythology, etc.

¹ Some 20 years later Boswell remarked that Johnson was 'so well skilled in both French and Italian as to be sufficiently qualified for a translator,' but how and when he acquired this knowledge he could not tell. Johnson never acquired fluency in French conversation. He could write it (says Boswell) 'pretty well,' as may be seen from his letter in French given B. 323.

3. 19. **one of the most learned**: probably Dr. Adams, later Master of Pembroke, who said, 'I was his nominal tutor; but he was above my mark' (B. 20).

3. 21. **about three years**. This is what Boswell says ('he left the College in autumn 1731, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years'), but Croker—whose edition of Boswell's book, so severely criticised by Macaulay, contains many new facts and ingenious guesses—discovered from the College books that Johnson most probably ceased to *reside* continuously at Pembroke in December, 1729. He seems to have returned for a week in March and again in September, 1730; and till October, 1731, there are a few small charges against him, so that his name was evidently kept on the College books nearly two years after he had ceased to reside.

3. 25. **Christ Church** was the fashionable College of Oxford. It was founded by Cardinal Wolsey. Its first name was Cardinal College. Johnson's friend Taylor had (on Johnson's advice) preferred Christ Church to Pembroke on account of the lecturer Bateman, and it was in order to procure Bateman's lectures 'second hand' from Taylor that Johnson had to frequently pass through Christ Church quadrangle.

3. 28. **spurned them away**. This 'spirited refusal of an eleemosynary supply of shoes,' as Boswell calls it, may be well contrasted with the gentler spirit of after times—*e.g.* when Johnson wrote what he himself called 'a very thankful and respectful letter' to Hamilton—and also to Chancellor Thurlow—who had offered him money; and when, with tears in his eyes, he called down the blessing of God on those who had tried to procure him a grant to enable him to pass the winter in Italy (B. 655).

3. 29. **gentleman commoner**: called at Cambridge 'fellow commoner'; an undergraduate a cut above the ordinary 'commoner,' who again regarded himself superior to the sizar, or servitor. He wore gilt braid and tassel, dined at high-table with the fellows, and had other such questionable privileges, for which he paid heavily. Gibbon says. 'As gentleman commoner (at Magdalen, Oxford) I was admitted to the society of the fellows.' The species seems extinct, at Cambridge at least.

3. 31. **gross disrespect**. Dr. Adams told Boswell that Johnson had been 'caressed and loved by all' and was 'a gay and frolicsome fellow.' To this Johnson replied, 'Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness that they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor and thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority.' When Boswell praised his recalcitrancy as 'fortitude,' he said, 'No, Sir! Stark insensibility!' In spite of such 'insensibility'

he (like Milton) 'contracted a love and regard for his College' (as Dr. Adams said), and not only presented all his works to the College, but even 'had thoughts of leaving to it his house at Lichfield' (B. 14, 19). On his visit to Pembroke in 1754 he was received by Radcliffe, the then Master, 'very coldly,' and was considerably annoyed (B. 90), but was cordially greeted by others, both Fellows and College servants (B. 90). In later life he visited Oxford frequently.

3. 32. *gate*. 'His apartment was that upon the second floor over the gateway.' The scene that Macaulay here gives is copied from a description by Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, the celebrated compiler of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (B. 19).

3. 35. *dirty linen*. Later in life he confessed that he had 'no passion for clean linen' (B. 133).

4. 4. *Pope's Messiah*: a 'Sacred Eclogue in imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*.' It first appeared (says Morley) in the *Spectator*, No. 378, for May 14, 1712. In his *Pollio* (his 4th *Eclogue*, addressed to the rich *Pollio Vedius*) Virgil foreshadows the advent of a 'new progeny descended from heaven,' and the return of the Golden Age, in language that has some similarity to that of certain passages in Isaiah. It is deemed possible that he may have drawn upon some Jewish writer, or some of the so-called Sibylline writings, of which there were great numbers extant in his day, and in some of which doubtless Jewish prophecies were incorporated.

4. 6. *by Pope himself*. Hawkins states that Pope said: 'The writer of this poem will leave it a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original.'

4. 9. *Bachelor of Arts*. For his M.A. (by diploma) see B. 91-3, and for his LL.D. and D.C.L. see below, p. 27, l. 1. The whole of the remainder of this paragraph is taken almost literally from Boswell (B. 20, 21), who tells us that Johnson's father had 'fallen into a state of insolvency.'

4. 14. *autumn of 1731*. See above, 3. 18.

4. 19. *twenty pounds*: of which he 'layed by' only eleven guineas (*undecim aureos*), as we learn from his Diary. 'I now therefore see,' he adds, 'that I must make my own fortune.'

4. 26. *hypochondriac*. Boswell says a good deal about Johnson's 'hypochondria' and 'morbid melancholy' (B. 15, 16, 115, etc. See also 641), and gives, both in the *Life* and in a series of essays called *The Hypochondriac*, his own ideas on the subject of the complaint. He seems himself to have had attacks of it, or (as Johnson said of him) to have 'affected it from a desire of distinction.' Johnson treated Boswell's 'black dog,' as he called it, with unconcealed and perhaps well-deserved contempt. His

contempt was probably all the greater because his own hypochondria was not imaginative but due to a physical cause—probably a scrofulous affection of the brain.

4. 26. **long after:** *i.e.* in 1773, when at Dunvegan Castle (Skye). 'I inherited,' he said, 'a vile melancholy from my father, which made me mad all my life, at least not sober.' And when Lady M'Leod wondered that he should say this, Boswell remarked: 'Madam, he knows that with that madness he is superior to other men' (B. 5 and *Tour to Hebrides*, p. 156, in my edition). In his *Prayers and Meditations* (p. 155) Johnson also speaks of his 'disturbances of mind very near to madness.' 'Insanity,' says Boswell, 'was the object of his most dismal apprehension' (B. 16).

4. 28. **eccentricities.** See especially B. 166, 167, and H. i. 144 *n.*, 485 *n.*, where quotations are given from Sir Joshua Reynolds, Frances Burney, and others. Sir Joshua believed the contortions and grimaces to be due to mere habit, but Boswell held them to be involuntary and 'of the nature of that distemper called the St. Vitus's dance' (B. 46 and *Tour*, p. 6 *n.*). In a letter of recommendation Pope says of Johnson: 'He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad spectacle.'

5. 3. **missed a post.** This is from a description by a Mr. Whyte (given by Dr. Hill) who, through an opera-glass, watched Johnson from the house of 'old Mr. Sheridan.' He reports: 'Upon every post, as he passed along, he deliberately laid his hand; but missing one of them, when he had got at some distance, he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, and immediately returning performed the accustomed ceremony, and resumed his former course, not omitting one till he gained the crossing. This, Mr. Sheridan assured me, was his constant practice.' See *Tour*, p. 233 (Oct. 12), where something similar is recounted.

5. 7. **town clock.** He told a friend that 'he was sometimes so languid and inefficient, that he could not distinguish the hour upon the town clock' (B. 15).

5. 9. **hear his mother.** 'He mentioned (says Boswell) a thing as not unfrequent, of which I had never heard before—being called ... He said that one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call—*Sam*. She was then in Lichfield; but nothing ensued' (B. 562).

5. 10. **deep melancholy.** See above on *hypochondriac*, and Boswell's long note (B. 641-2) on Johnson's opinion as to the preponderance of misery in human life.

5. 14. **no temptation to commit suicide.** To Boswell's question, 'Do you think, Sir, that all who commit suicide are mad?'

Johnson answered that 'they are often not universally disturbed in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them, that they yield to it' (B. 257). A passage in one of the *Ramblers* (No. 85) was 'supposed by some readers to recommend suicide.' See Johnson's explanation, B. 584.

5. 15. **afraid of death.** Among his sayings on this subject are, that 'he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him'; and that 'the better a man is, the more afraid he is of death'; and that 'the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of death.' How often he failed in this attempt to keep such thoughts at a distance is evident from a perusal of his life (see B. 204, 210, 284, 412, 469, 628, 640, 678). Quite at the end, when he knew that he was dying, he 'appeared to be perfectly resigned' (as was reported to Boswell by his brother Thomas David) and seems to have at last realised what long before in his *Vanity of Human Wishes* he had preached, namely, that one of the highest privileges of man is to pray

'For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat.'

5. 19. **his religion.** Johnson's frequent and very candid utterances allow us to form some notion of what Macaulay here meant by 'his religion.' Perhaps the clearest expression of it is given by his *Prayers and Meditations*, which were published¹ after his death by a Rev. Mr. Strahan (B. 671). As regards mere externals, Johnson was by lineage a Tory, and therefore of course a true-born High Churchman²—a fact that he seems to have realised at the age of three, when he 'insisted' on hearing Dr. Sacheverel preach. Such things as Presbyterianism and Methodism he could not away with. And yet, curiously enough, John Wesley and George Whitefield seem, to some extent, to have owed their 'conversion' (H. i. 68 *n*) to the same book which proved for Johnson 'the first occasion of thinking in earnest of religion'—the *Serious Call* of the non-juring Cambridge divine, William Law (B. 17).

5. 27. **at two-and-twenty.** Probably rather earlier. See on p. 3, l. 18. But it was in December, 1731, that his father died, and, a few months later, he found himself with his 'undecim aurei' to face the world (B. 21).

¹ Dr. Hill very rightly protests against the inclusion in these *Meditations* of a great deal (taken from Johnson's private diaries) that everyone but a literary or journalistic scavenger would have reverently suppressed. But why does Dr. H. supplement these revelations in his appendix?

² The bias of his mind is shown—as a feather may show the direction of the wind—by the fact that he fasted in Passion-week and was once troubled by remorse at having indulged in a few drops of milk in his 'very small tea' on Good Friday. Voltaire, who was incapable of appreciating at its true value the religious earnestness of Johnson, spoke of him 'as a superstitious dog.'

5. 31. **Henry Hervey**: third son of the first Earl of Bristol. He was 'quartered at Lichfield as an officer of the army.' He 'quitted the army and took orders. He married a sister of Sir Thomas Aston [whom Johnson knew at Lichfield], by whom he got the Aston estate' (B. 31 n, 22 n). See below, p. 8, l. 25.

5. 32. **Gilbert Walmesley** (properly Walmsley) is 'drawn in glowing colours of gratitude' by Johnson in his life of Edmund Smith (*Lives of the Poets*). The description is given by Boswell (B. 21). He was a scholar and a Whig. See references in Index, Globe edition.

6. 4. **grammar-school**: at Market-Bosworth. Boswell gives a graphic description of the 'painful drudgery' and 'complicated misery' of this ushership—'a situation which all his life afterward he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror' (B. 22). Many years later he was very angry at being addressed as 'Domine' ('Master!'), because it sounded like the rather scornful 'dominie' applied to pedagogues. His feelings on the subject of schoolmastering come out in his *Life of Milton*, where he speaks of being 'degraded to a schoolmaster.' But he allows that teaching is 'an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful.'

6. 5. **humble companion ... country gentleman**. I can find no trace of this in Boswell. Probably Macaulay read a little carelessly the statement of Boswell that, while usher at Market-Bosworth, Johnson had a disagreement with Sir Wolston Dixie, the patron of the school, 'in whose house, I have been told, he officiated as a kind of domestic chaplain, so far at least as to say grace at table.' This titled school patron seems to have treated the poor usher with 'intolerable harshness' (B. 22).

6. 7. **Birmingham**. Here 'he continued to live as Mr. Hector's guest for about six months, and then hired lodgings.' Edmund Hector, now seeking practice in Birmingham as surgeon, had been Johnson's schoolfellow. Hector and Johnson boarded for these six months in the house of a Mr. Warren, who was 'the first established bookseller in Birmingham,' and proprietor of the *Birmingham Journal* (H. i. 85 n). He was 'very attentive to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much service to him.' It was Warren who especially urged Johnson to publish his translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*, and Johnson received five guineas from Warren for the work (B. 23). Father Lobo was a Portuguese Jesuit. The Latin original seems never to have been printed, so that Macaulay's statement is inaccurate. Johnson made (as Boswell plainly states) an 'abridgement and translation' of a *French* version, which was published in 1728. (See Morris' note to B. 23.) This French version Johnson borrowed from the library of Pembroke College, where he had formerly read it. Boswell remarks that the interest in Abyssinia

thus excited in Johnson's mind was 'the remote occasion of his writing, many years afterwards,' his *Rasselas*.

6. 12. **Politian**: *i.e.* Agnolo del Monte Pulciano, known as Politianus or Poliziano, was a brilliant scholar and writer of the fifteenth century (1454-94). He was educated at the expense of Cosmo de' Medici, and became professor of Greek and Latin at Florence. He wrote much-admired poems in Latin as well as the pastoral tale *Orfeo* in Italian *terza rima* (the metre of Dante's great poem). Sir John Hawkins asserts that Johnson for more than fifty years forgot to return a 'curious edition of Politian' which he had borrowed from Pembroke College—evidently on this occasion (B. 24 and 668 *n*). Johnson made this attempt (August, 1734) not at Birmingham as Macaulay seems to state, but at Lichfield, where his brother Nathanael was carrying on his father's book-shop.

6. 16. **fell in love**: not, it seems, for the first time. Boswell mentions (25) a young Quaker as an early flame, and Johnson confessed that Hector's sister (afterwards Mrs. Careless) was his first love (B. 344). Mrs. Porter's maiden name was Jarvis or Jervis.

6. 17. **children as old** .. Lucy Porter (to whom Johnson remained much attached) was born in 1715, and her brother Jarvis in 1717. There was another son, 'Captain Porter' (d. 1763), who may possibly have been as old as Johnson (B. 26, H. i. 94 *n*).

6. 18. **the lady appeared** ... This is a rather softened version of Garrick's account. But he was given to exaggeration in his mimicry of the strange pair (B. 28). Mrs. Thrale (Piozzi) said that she saw a picture of Tetty at Lichfield which represented her as 'very pretty'; and Tetty's daughter Lucy said it was a good likeness. Boswell, of course, never saw her, as she died in 1752, eleven years before he met Johnson.

6. 21. **Queensberrys and Lepels**. Catharine, Duchess of Queensberry (d. 1777), was celebrated for her wit and beauty. Her praises were sung by Prior, Pope, Horace Walpole, and others. She was daughter of the Earl of Clarendon. Mary Lepel, a court beauty and maid of honour, became Lady Hervey. She received adulation from most of the literary celebrities of the day. Pope calls her his 'dear Lepell.'

6. 25. **Titty**. What *can* it matter (to use Matthew Arnold's words) whether Johnson called his wife Titty or Tetty? But I suppose it is the annotator's duty to point out that Macaulay, trusting probably to his memory, is here, as often,¹ inaccurate—

¹To cite one instance of many, in his *Essay on Milton* he quotes Milton's poetry four times wrongly. *e.g.* 'Bound in strong fetters' instead of 'in stony fetters'; 'o'er their heads' instead of 'nigh at hand,' etc.

unless indeed 'Titty' is a misprint. Boswell's account is that Johnson used to 'name her by the familiar appellation of Tetty or Tetsey, which, like Betty or Betsey, is used provincially as a contraction for Elisabeth' (B. 28). In his *Prayers and Meditations* he very frequently mentions her, and always as 'Tetty.'

6. 28. **as poor as ...** Boswell speaks of her 'want of fortune'; but whence did Johnson obtain the means of setting up his school? He possessed only the 'eleven guineas' from his father and the five for the literary job. The writer of a *Memoir of Johnson* (1785) says: 'Mrs. Porter's husband died insolvent, but her settlement was secured. She brought her second husband about seven or eight hundred pounds, a great part of which was expended in fitting up a house for a boarding-school' (H. 95 n).

6. 29. **a suitor who ...** Johnson was not quite 26 when he married (July 9, 1735), and she was 46, so that Boswell's 'double the age of Johnson' is fairly correct. Johnson was personally probably the less attractive of the two. See Lucy Porter's graphic description (B. 26). It was Johnson's conversation that was the attraction. 'This is,' exclaimed the widow, 'the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life' (B. 26).

6. 30. **occasional wranglings.** What Boswell calls the 'little disagreements that sometimes troubled Johnson's married state,' in which 'he probably was not oftener in the wrong than she was,' were evidently rather common at one time, but on the whole were of a transient character. They were, he told Mrs. Thrale, not seldom occasioned by the question of food, or by his wife's 'particular reverence for cleanliness,' for which he himself 'had no passion' (See B. 77-79). It cannot but strike one as curious that for a considerable period, while consorting with Savage and other such characters in London, Johnson had evidently no home. Where was his wife at this time? Hawkins asserts that the separation was caused by estrangement. More probably, as Dr. Hill says, it arose from destitution, and Mrs. Johnson was perhaps with friends. Mrs. Desmoulins (see on p. 32, l. 4), however, told Boswell that Mrs. Johnson 'indulged herself in country air and nice living at an unsuitable expense, while her husband was drudging in London.'

6. 34. **an inscription.** He calls her 'formosa, culta, ingeniosa, pia' (B. 79. n). This epitaph was composed only a few months before his death.

7. 4. **took a house:** at Edial, two miles from Lichfield. He advertised his school in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Sir Walter Scott, in a note contributed to Croker's edition, tells us that Boswell's father, Lord Auchinleck, spoke with 'a sneer of most sovereign contempt of the *auld dominie* to whose tail Jamie had pinned himself ... "a dominie, mon—an auld dominie! He

kept a schule, and caud it an acaadamy !'' (H. i. 96. T. ix.). Boswell calls it a 'private academy' (B. 27).

7. 6. only three pupils: 'the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early' (B. 27).

7. 12. David Garrick (1716-1779) came to London with Johnson in March, 1737, purposing to study law; but he gave this up and joined his brother as wine-merchant. In 1741, having come in for some money, he 'followed his natural bent, took to the stage, and became the greatest actor of his time, and author, translator, or adaptor of about forty plays' (Morley). He plays a very considerable part in Boswell's book. Reference to the more important passages will be found in the Index of the Globe Edition. See also below 16. 5 and 28. 17.

7. 18. He set out... i.e. in March, 1737. But he returned to Lichfield about June, and did not permanently settle in London till September. See Chronological Summary.

7. 19. the tragedy of Irene. See p. 16, l. 3.

7. 23. In the preceding generation... There are several passages in Macaulay's writings in which he expands and illustrates this text. The following is interesting because he gives a reason for the fact that (as he says elsewhere) 'the chiefs of both the great parties patronized literature with emulous magnificence.' 'Many probably,' he says in his *Essay on Addison*, 'will think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavourable effect on his success as a politician... It would now be inconceivable that a mere adventurer, a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen, should in a few years become successively Undersecretary of State, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Secretary of State, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth and with little property, rose to a post which Dukes, the heads of the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck, have thought it an honour to fill. Without opening his lips in debate he rose to a post the highest that Chatham or Fox ever reached... We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar circumstances in which that generation was placed... At present... a speech made in the House of Commons at four in the morning is on thirty thousand breakfast tables before ten. A speech made on the Monday is read on the Wednesday in Antrim and Aberdeenshire. The orator, by the help of the shorthand writer, has to a great extent superseded the pamphleteer. It was not so in the reign of Anne... The pen was a more formidable political engine than the tongue.' In his essay on *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (see edition in this series, p. 29, and Mr. Winch's notes) Macaulay gives a list of literary men who rose to high

places. Of these he probably alludes here to (1) Montague, (2) Prior and Stepney, (3) Addison.

Montague (as Johnson tells us in his *Lives*) was made in 1694 Chancellor of the Exchequer, was 'advanced to the first Commission of the Treasury, made one of the Regency in the king's absence, and created Baron Halifax.' It was to a poem on the death of Charles II. and a burlesque piece called *The City and Country Mouse* that Montague 'owed his introduction' (says Macaulay) 'into public life, his earldom (?), and his garter.' But he was evidently a man of considerable practical ability, and probably saved the Bank of England from ruin by his successful policy of recoinng clipped silver money. Moreover, he had the advantage of being an Earl's son.

The poet Prior (1664-1721) was employed on many embassies as secretary, and the poet, or rather verse-maker, Stepney (as Johnson states in his *Lives*) was sent as Envoy to electoral and imperial courts, congresses, etc., on eight occasions between 1692 and 1701.

7. 30. **several writers of the nineteenth century:** such as Byron, Scott, and Macaulay himself. In 1826 Scott was involved in the bankruptcy of the Edinburgh printing house of Ballantyne & Co., and his obligations amounted to about £130,000. In *two years* he was able, by means of literary work (his novels), to pay off £40,000, and nearly the same amount during the last three or four years of his life, in spite of failing health. The rest was supplied by the sale of his works not long after his death. That the amount that Macaulay made by literature—especially by his *History*—was very large may be inferred from such extracts from his journal as this: 'Twenty-six thousand five hundred copies sold in ten weeks! I should not wonder if I made £20,000 clear this year by literature' (*Life*, p. 637).

7. 32. **But Johnson entered...** The parallel passage in the essay on *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (see the edition in this series, pp. 30-33) gives a similar account in Macaulay's earlier, highly florid, and exuberant style. The chapter on 'Literary Career' in Sir Leslie Stephen's *Samuel Johnson* (English Men of Letters) should also be read in this connexion. A good many writers of Johnson's day, among them Goldsmith and Fielding, received very fair remuneration. But doubtless there was great misery among Grub Street writers, and many an author worthy of a better fate was forced by sheer destitution to become what Johnson calls the 'lowest of all human beings'—a 'Scribbler for a Party,' or, like Defoe, to 'sell himself and act as a spy.' Johnson, when at St. Andrews (T. 35), strongly opposed Boswell's remark that 'it is a shame that authors are now not better patronized,' and contended for 'throwing truth among the multitude.' His opinion merits all the more respect

considering how much he himself had suffered from those horrors which, on another occasion, he compared with the forms of terror that people Virgil's Entrance to Hell (see T. 238)—a comparison that makes even Macaulay's vigorous delineations appear faint.

8. 1. **Pope.** 'Pope received some £8000 for his translation of Homer, by the then popular mode of subscription—a kind of compromise between the systems of patronage and public support' (L. Stephen). Some give it as £5000 for the *Iliad* and £4000 for the *Odyssey*. He was familiar with Harley (Earl of Oxford), Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Marchmont, etc.

8. 6. **Thomson** wrote his *Seasons* between 1726 and 1730, *Winter* appearing first. The poem was one of the first harbingers of a return to nature, and a reaction against the classical school of Pope and Dryden, and the theories and practice of such would-be poets as Addison and Johnson. The *Seasons* is Thomson's chief work (the *Castle of Indolence* is also worth naming). Wordsworth, who was well competent to judge, called it 'a work of inspiration.' Even Johnson, who was by no means so infallible on such a subject, 'allowed high praise to Thomson as a poet' (B. 194), and said that he had 'a true poetical genius'; but complained that he was too cloudy and vague. To prove his point, he once took down Thomson's works and read passages aloud. 'Is not this fine?' he asked. His auditor expressed the highest admiration. 'Well, sir,' said Johnson, 'I have omitted every other line' (B. 366). In his *London* Johnson shows what one might mistake for an almost Thomsonian admiration of rural bliss; but we know too well what his real sentiments were on this subject, so that we may, with Sir L. Stephen, regard these strains as 'imitative and artificial.' (See T. 71 and H. V. 439 n.)

8. 7. **Fielding** (Henry, 1707-1754) is chiefly known by his novels, especially *Tom Jones*. He also wrote dramatic pieces. *Pasquin*, a 'Dramatic Satire on the Times,' was first acted in 1736. It attacked the political corruption of Walpole's epoch. Sir Walter Scott calls Fielding 'the father of the English novel,' and Byron calls him 'the prose Homer of human nature.' Johnson, on the other hand (with some justice, I think), held that he drew pictures of very low life, and that 'there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*.' In a moment of irritation Johnson even exclaimed that Fielding was a 'blockhead,' and explained that he meant 'a barren rascal' (B. 235. See also Johnson and Boswell on the subject, B. 189).

8. 8. **The Beggars' Opera**, by John Gay (1688-1732), was first produced in 1728. Its taking airs and satirical hits made it immensely popular. He got £400 for it, and thrice as much for

a second part, *Polly*. Johnson's criticism on the *Beggars' Opera* is characteristic. At first he denied that it had such an immoral influence as was generally believed. 'I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by it,' he said. Then, collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke: 'There is in it such a *labefaction* of all principles as may be injurious to morality' (B. 309).

8. 14. **One of the publishers.** Wilcox by name (B. 30 n). Hawkins states that he lent Johnson and Garrick £5.

8. 21. **connection**, as also *inflection*, *reflection*, etc. (all words derived from Lat. *necto* and *flecto*, which make their p. part. *nexus* and *flexus*), should undoubtedly be spelt with *x* and not with *ct*. I observe that the *Times* sets a good example in this.

8. 25. **Hervey.** See above on p. 5, l. 31.

8. 32. **near Drury Lane.** His first lodgings were in Exeter Street (off the Strand), and he dined (he told Boswell) 'at the Pine Apple in New Street, just by.' Another writer (Cumberland) says that Johnson declared he had for a considerable time *lived on 4½d. a day* (B. 30 n). Dr. Hill gives descriptions of most savoury dinners procurable in that age for sums ranging from 10d. to 4d.

9. 4. **ravenous greediness.** Many illustrations of this are given by Boswell, and may be found under 'eating,' etc., in Hill's Index, if desired. A *locus classicus* is B. 161. His voracious appetite increased to an unnatural extent (as he allows in letters to Mrs. Thrale) in his last illness. See the description of the dinner at General Paoli's on June 25, 1784 (B. 653). And only two days later (June 27) Beattie, who dined with him, reports: 'I verily believe that he ate as much to dinner as I have done in all for these ten days past.'

9. 7. **ordinaries**: eating-houses where meals are to be had at a fixed price, cheaper of course than when ordered *à la carte*. In the *Essay on Boswell* Macaulay speaks of 'eating potatoes at an Irish ordinary,' and says of Johnson: 'he emerged at length from cocklofts and sixpenny ordinaries ...'

9. 7. **à la mode** = 'fashionable'; but whether this was a title given to a certain kind of beefshop, and whether because such places supplied 'beef *à la mode*,' i.e. larded and braised with spices, I cannot say.

9. 9. **hare ... rancid butter.** Where Macaulay found the hare I do not know. The rancid butter was in a pie crust of which Burke offered him too small a portion (H. l. 470 n). In the *Essay* we have 'his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal-pie with plums' (see B. 161 n).

9. 11. **that his veins swelled**, etc. This is taken almost literally from B. 161. Cf. *Essay*, p. 34.

9. 14. **sycophancy.** A sycophant in Greek (*συκοφάντης*) means an 'informer,' hence also a 'calumniator,' 'backbiter.' Its original meaning was perhaps (though this is doubtful) a 'fig-revealer,' i.e. an informer against smugglers of figs, or injurers of fig-trees. In English the word has somehow got to mean a servile hanger-on, sponger, toady, parasite.

9. 21. **Osborne** is mentioned several times in Pope's *Dunciad*, together with the notorious bookseller Curl (Macaulay brackets them in his *Essay*, p. 33). Pope adds a note stating that Osborne 'published advertisements for a year together pretending to sell Mr. Pope's subscription books of Homer's *Iliad* at half price, of which books he had none, but cut to the size of them the common books, without copper plates, on a coarse paper, and never above half the value.' Sir L. Stephen says: 'Johnson was employed by Osborne to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Osborne offensively reproved him for negligence, and Johnson knocked him down with a folio. The book with which the feat was performed (*Biblia Graeca Septuaginta*, fol. 1594, Frankfurt) was in existence in a bookseller's shop at Cambridge in 1812, and should surely have been placed in some safe authors' museum.' Boswell says: 'It has been confidently related, with many embellishments, that Johnson knocked down Osborne in his shop with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. The simple truth I had from Johnson himself. "Sir, he was impertinent to me and I beat him. But it was not in his shop; it was in my own chamber"' (B. 49). To Mrs. Thrale Johnson gave a similar account, adding: 'I have beat many a fellow, but the rest had the wit to hold their tongues.' [Goldsmith likewise beat a bookseller, for which he had to make a public apology. When Johnson was asked about this beating he replied: 'Sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat*; he may have *been beaten* before. This, Sir, is a new plume to him.']

9. 24. **Harleian Library**: a collection of books and MSS. made by Harley, Earl of Oxford, and his son. It was bought by Osborne for £13,000 ('not more than the binding of the books had cost'), and Johnson, who had already written for the *Gentleman's Magazine* a paper called *Proposals for Printing Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford*, was employed by Thomas Osborne to help in the compilation of a Catalogue. His paper 'was prefixed to the first volume of the Catalogue, in which the Latin accounts of books were written by him' (B. 49). The Harleian library, together with the Sloane collection, formed (in 1753) the first nucleus of the British Museum.

9. 25. **to reside.** It was in March, 1738, that he began to write for Cave, i.e. just a year after his first visit to London, but only six months after he had 'begun to reside.' See *Chron.*

Summary. His first contribution, a Latin Ode to Cave, is given by Boswell (B. 34). He had written to Cave from Lichfield (B. 31) and had advertised his 'academy' in the *Magazine*.

9. 27. Cave, Edward, was (says Sir L. Stephen) 'a man of some mark in the history of literature.' He made his mark by founding (1731) the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which he conducted at first under the assumed name of Sylvanus Urban. Johnson had much affection for him, and wrote his Life (1754) for the *Gentleman's Magazine* (B. 85). The sale, according to Johnson (B. 480) was 10,000 copies, and some of the numbers reached many editions; but Hawkins states that while Johnson composed the *Debates* the sale rose from 10,000 to 15,000, and 'Cave manifested his good fortune by buying an old coach and a pair of older horses' (H. i. 152 n). Cave had at first, it seems, indulged in the then common practice of trusting to indecent publications to forward his business (H. i. 112 n), but Johnson's contributions to his *Magazine* evidently gave it a more respectable tone.

9. 33. It was not then safe. Various Acts forbade the publication of the *Debates* in Parliament, but it was commonly believed that this only applied to the time when Parliament was actually sitting. In April, 1738, however (only a few days after Johnson began to write for the *Magazine*), the Commons unanimously resolved that it was 'a high indignity and a notorious breach of privilege' to give, even during the recess, any account of the debates. 'Imperfect reports,' says Green, 'of the more important discussions began to be published under the title of *The Senate of Lilliput*, with feigned names or simple initials to denote the speaker. Obtained by stealth, and often merely recalled by memory, these reports were naturally inaccurate; and their inaccuracy was eagerly seized on as a pretext for enforcing the rules which guarded the secrecy of proceedings in Parliament.' It was John Wilkes, in his *North Briton*, who first (1764) denounced a minister by name. He was imprisoned, and although he regained his liberty by claiming a writ of *habeas corpus*, he had to flee the country, and was expelled from Parliament. But the stone that he had set rolling was not to be stopped. In 1771 the struggle between the Commons and the Press came to a crisis—and after vainly imprisoning the Lord Mayor and failing in the prosecution of 'Junius,' the Parliament desisted from further steps. The first great English newspapers date from this period. The 'liberty of the press' in England now allows all reasonable criticism not only of Parliament but of the sovereign himself.

10. 1. Blefuscu... These names are all taken from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. According to Boswell, 'this important article' of the *Magazine* had been already, during several years, undertaken by a Mr. Guthrie (for whom see B. 35 n), who

'brought home and digested' the Debates. Johnson supplied the Debates¹ from November, 1740, to February, 1743, when he suddenly gave up the post because he found that his fabrications were believed to be genuine (one at least was translated into French, German, and Spanish, and published on the continent as a genuine Debate) and he would no longer 'be accessory to the propagation of falsehood.' Dr. Hill has expended a vast deal of time and energy in collecting every stray tag of evidence on the subject and weaving them together into an Appendix of about 12 large closely printed pages. But surely the only real interest that Johnson's *Debates* now possess is a literary interest, and the pith of this is well given by Sir L. Stephen in a few lines: 'Long afterwards, Francis, the father of Junius'—by the way, this is a considerable assumption—'mentioned a speech of Pitt's as superior to anything in Demosthenes. Hereupon Johnson replied: "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter Street"... The editors of Chesterfield's Works published two of the speeches, and, to Johnson's considerable amusement, declared that one of them resembled Demosthenes and the other Cicero. It is plain enough to the modern reader that, if so, both of the ancient orators must have written true Johnsonese.'

10. 10. a Tory is defined by Johnson in his *Dictionary* as 'one who adheres to the ancient constitution of the State and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England.' (For curious derivations of 'Tory' and 'Whig' see my note to *Tour*, p. 149.) A sensible and fair account, by a Dr. Maxwell, of Johnson's political tenets will be found in Boswell, p. 214. A collection of his political dicta would be useless except to reveal many inconsistencies, and the fact that on this subject perhaps more than on any other he 'talked for victory'—not from 'rational conviction, but from mere passion.' Such ebullitions as: 'Sir, he is a cursed Whig, a bottomless Whig'; 'Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig'; 'The first Whig was the Devil,' and so on, should be contrasted with the exceedingly liberal apophthegms which he dictated to Boswell, beginning with the words: 'A wise Tory and a wise Whig, I believe, will agree. Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are different' (B. 571). It was only what he called 'bottomless Whigs' that he really hated, though in the heat of debate he would vent his 'rhinoceros' snort (B. 314) of contempt at all 'reform,' and what in his *London* he calls the 'Lust of Innovation.'

10. 11. one form of government... 'I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another' (B. 234, and *Essay*, p. 41). It should, however, be

¹ They were spread, rather irregularly, through the *Magazine* between July, 1741, and March, 1744.

noticed that he added: 'It is of no moment to the happiness of an *individual*. The danger of the abuse of power is nothing to a *private man*.' Moreover, as Sir L. Stephen well points out (p. 184), the question between one form of government and another was with Johnson by no means identical with the question between Toryism and Whiggism. With him 'Whig' (as he defined it in his *Dictionary*) was only 'the name of a *faction*,' i.e. of something subversive of all true government; Whiggism was a 'negation of all principle'; the first Whig was the devil, the personification of Negation—der verneinende Geist of Goethe's *Faust*. In passing, one may remark that the 'juring' Toryism of Johnson's day (such as that of his father, and indeed such as his own as 'pensioner') may be, not less justly than Whiggism, described as 'bottomless'; for it was a baseless fabric, self-sustained on the negation of its fundamental principles.¹ By a marvellous *hocus-pocus* such Tories professed to still believe in the divine right of a lineal king and the apostolic succession of a supreme head of the Church, although they had accepted at least *formaliter*—'for the salvation of their souls,' as Johnson said (B. 300), and perhaps sometimes for more mundane objects—the Reformation, the Revolution, and the Act of Settlement. In Johnson himself occasional ebullitions of loyalism (*e.g.* after his interview with King George) offer a curious contrast to that 'semi-humorous' Jacobitism which he used to affect with so much 'pleasantry and ingenuity' (B. 146). Perhaps we may regard in this light his remark that Prince Charlie's raid to Derby in '45 was a 'noble attempt' (B. 415).

10. 13. **Blues ... Greens.** At the chariot races in the Roman Circus there were four rival factions distinguished by four colours (Alba, Russata, Veneta, and Prasina). Of these the Veneta (blue) and Prasina (leek-green) were the chief—corresponding somewhat to our dark and light blue in University contests. Juvenal, listening to the distant uproar (from, perhaps, his attic 'where only a single tile protects one from the rain, and where gentle pigeons lay their eggs'), says: 'To-day the Circus holds the whole of Rome and on my ear strikes a roar from which I infer the victory of the green ribbon' (xi. 198). In Marcus Aurelius (i. ii.) we find: 'Of him that brought me up I learned not to be fondly addicted to the two great factions of the racers in the Circus, called the Prasini and the Veneti.' These blue and green badges were adopted for political party purposes, and in later times (*e.g.* in the reign of Justinian, about 550 A.D.) the feud between the Blues and Greens in Constantinople led to great bloodshed. See Gibbon, chap. 40.

¹ See what Macaulay says on the *literary* judgments of Johnson, beginning 'How it chanced that a man who reasoned on his premises so ably should assume his premises so foolishly, is one of the great mysteries of human nature' (*Essay*, 41, 42).

10. 17. **he had insisted** ... Macaulay's authority is a Lichfield lady, whose letter Boswell quotes. Her grandfather saw the precocious infant perched on his father's shoulder 'listening and gaping at the much celebrated preacher,' and having asked how Mr. Johnson could think of bringing the child to church, was told that it had been 'impossible to keep him at home' (B. 6). Dr. Sacheverel (for whom see any English History) is known to have preached at Lichfield in 1710, but at this time Johnson was only nine months old. Mr. Croker therefore disbelieved the story; but Dr. Hill thinks it may have been early in 1713, after Sacheverel's suspension from preaching had expired, when Johnson would have been about $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

10. 27. **Tom Tempest**, a character in Johnson's *Idler* (No. 10), is a ridiculous Jacobite bigot.

10. 27. **Charles II. and James II.** ... 'Charles the Second was licentious in his practice, but he always had a reverence for what was good ... He was the best king we have had till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good king, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics ... We, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics ... submitted to the government of King William—of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed' (B. 300). It is worth while to remark Johnson's oft and strongly-asserted doctrine of the efficacy of faith with bad works—of 'good principles' with 'licentious practice'—a doctrine to which Boswell naturally gave a warm welcome. What Johnson meant by such 'good principles' is not easy to understand. They seem to be principles which (as Beauclerk said to Boswell) are not worn out by practice. 'Campbell,' Johnson said, 'is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling his hat off; this shows he has good principles.' As Macaulay well remarks, Spain and Sicily must, at this rate, contain many pious robbers and well-principled assassins.

10. 29. **Archbishop Laud**, the ill-fated Counsellor of Charles I., and the great adversary of Presbyterianism, was imprisoned by the Long Parliament in 1641 (when Stafford was beheaded), and remained in prison till 1645, when, after the battle of Naseby and the ruin of the royalist cause, he was executed. In his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, Johnson cites Laud's fate to prove that the coveted prizes bestowed by Learning prove sometimes fatal:

'Marked out by dangerous parts he meets the shock,
And fatal Learning leads him to the block.
Around his tomb let Art and Genius weep;
But hear his death, ye blockheads,—hear, and sleep!'

Laud, the idol of the High Church Tories, was Macaulay's pet aversion. He entertained for him 'a more unmitigated contempt than for any other character in our history,' and compares the affection paid him by this section of the Church with the affection of a mother for the 'monster or idiot of a family' (*Essays*, pop. edn., p. 76).

10. 32. **Hampden.** I do not know where Johnson speaks thus of Hampden, nor where he refuses to call the ship-money an unconstitutional impost. For a dramatic account (from a Whig point of view) of Hampden's refusal to pay the ship-money, and the opinions of Lord Falkland and Lord Clarendon on Hampden's conduct, see Macaulay's *Essay on Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden* (*Essays*, pop. edn., p. 205 seq.), and for Lord Falkland and Lord Clarendon, see my edition of Macaulay's *Milton*, pp. 147, 125.

11. 14. **assailed the ministry** ... These strictures of Macaulay apply equally to Johnson's *London*, of which Boswell says, 'While we admire its poetical excellence, candour obliges us to allow that the flame of patriotism'—the then cant term for opposition to the Walpole ministry—'and zeal for popular resistance, with which it is fraught, had no just cause. There was in truth *no* "oppression"; the nation was *not* "cheated" ... But Johnson's juvenile poem was naturally impregnated with the fire of opposition.' At a later period Johnson 'honestly acknowledged the merit of Walpole' (B. 40).

11. 10. **stock-jobbers.** To what exactly Macaulay here alludes I cannot say. Johnson naturally inveighed against the 'stock-jobbing' and financial innovations of the Whigs which gave William the means of continuing the war with France, as well as against Walpole's great financial schemes (1720-44). But the only occasion on which Johnson (as far as I know) mentions the National Debt (which was started by the Whig Chancellor, Montague, Earl of Halifax, in 1694), he defends it as a safe institution. In *London* he lashes those who 'Collect a tax, or farm a lottery'—but these are not stock-jobbers. Perhaps Macaulay alludes to the jobberies connected with the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720.

11. 11. **the excise:** a tax levied on certain commodities of home production, licenses, etc. See below, p. 23, l. 26.

11. 11. **the army.** He was naturally hostile to Whig wars and everything else military supported by the Whigs, but he seems to have sometimes admired soldiers. 'His abhorrence,' says Boswell, 'of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent, but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier' (B. 457). On the other hand, in his *Marmor Norfolciense*, he describes a soldier as a 'red animal that ranges

uncontrolled and devours the labours of the trades and husbandman; that carries with it corruption, rapine, pollution, and devastation.' And in a letter (B. 457) he says: 'a soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption.'

11. 11. **septennial parliaments.** This I do not understand, for Johnson's *ipse dixit* on the subject is: 'The duration of Parliament, whether for seven years or the life of the King, appears to me so immaterial that I would not give half-a-crown to turn the scale one way or the other' (B. 198). Between 1714 and 1775 six Parliaments had seven sessions apiece, one eight, one six, and one five. Possibly he inveighed in his *Debates* against one of these septennial Parliaments.—The 'Septennial Bill' in 1716 had extended the duration of Parliament to seven from the three years to which it had been limited by the 'Triennial Bill' in William's reign.

11. 12. **Continental connections.** 'Johnson was a real *true-born Englishman*. He hated the Scotch, the French, the Dutch, the Hanoverians, and had the greatest contempt for all other European nations' (Baretti, quoted by Dr. Hill, 4. 15n). According to Johnson 'all foreigners were fools' (B. 532). See his diatribes against foreigners in his *London*, and his pungent remarks on French manners, B. 322.

11. 13. **The Scotch.** See on 33. 34. To illustrate fully Johnson's antipathy to Scotland and the Scotch would be a large undertaking. See B. 145, 285, 286, 287, 288, 590, etc. Many of his sallies had enough of both humour and truth to excite the wrath of several generations of Scotch susceptibility. Boswell, who was himself a Scotchman, justly inveighs against the 'obstinate and sulky rationality' of such 'shallow and irritable North Britons.' As to much that gave offence in such quarters—*e.g.* about the climate, the trees, and the general barrenness of Scotland—Johnson's own comment was, and still is, very much to the point. 'None of us,' he said, 'would be offended if a foreigner should say that vines and olives don't grow in England.' His appreciation of a great deal in Scotland and in Scotch character is apparent, and such sayings as 'much may be made of a Scotchman if he be caught young,' should go far to pacify by its humour everyone—except perhaps the Scotchman who, when he was told of Sidney Smith's joke, replied with some warmth that 'he didn't see what good a surgical operation would do.'

11. 14. **had probably originated.** This is derived by Macaulay from a conversation related by Boswell (B. 590). After Johnson had allowed that he meant to vex the Scotch by his definition of 'oats' (for which see on 33. 34), Boswell asks, 'Pray, Sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the

Scotch?" JOHNSON: "I cannot, Sir." BOSWELL: "Old Mr. Sheridan says it was because they sold Charles the First." JOHNSON: "Then, Sir, old Mr. Sheridan has found out a very good reason."

Boswell, however, gives what he thinks a better—viz., that Johnson had got a wrong idea of Scotchmen from the many 'needy adventurers' who flooded England after the Union (1707).

11. 22. **Whig dogs.** This is derived from Murphy's *Johnson* (p. 45). The passage is quoted by Dr. Hill in his Appendix on Johnson's *Debates* (H. 1. 504).

11. 31. **Juvenal.** *London* is a free imitation of the celebrated Third Satire of Juvenal, a Roman poet who lived towards the end of the first century of our era. In regard to all that is great, vital, and true in art, there is no more affinity between Johnson's verses and Juvenal's poem than there is between some Berninesque 18th century monument and the Faun of Praxiteles. But there are passages in *London*, and more in the *Vanity of Human Wishes* (p. 15, l. 17), that have considerable rhetorical force and pathos. Its popularity was also greatly due to its attacks on political and social corruption. Both should be read and compared with their models. For Johnson's praise of the country in his *London*, see above, p. 8, l. 6. Sir L. Stephen (p. 34), perhaps not too severely, dubs him with the name of the 'insincere cockney.'

11. 32. **pigeons' nests.** See on p. 10, l. 13. Juvenal's words are:

'quem tegula sola tuetur
A pluvia, molles ubi reddunt ova columbae.' †

11. 34. **Horace's Satires and Epistles.** These were in a similar fashion imitated (between 1730 and 1740) by Pope. 'This mode of imitation,' says Johnson in his *Life of Pope*, 'by which the ancients are familiarised by adapting their sentiments to modern topics, by making Horace say of Shakspeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles II. by Oldham and Rochester... It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and the parallels lucky.'

As Boswell says (B. 36), the French poet Boileau had already imitated the Third Satire of Juvenal, applying it to Paris; John Oldham, known as the English Juvenal for his Satires against the Jesuits (died, age 30, in 1683), had anticipated Johnson in applying it to London.

12. 5. May, 1738. 'It came out on the same morning with Pope's satire entitled "1738"' (B. 38). Johnson offered it to Cave as the production of some poor author of his acquaintance. Cave passed it on to Dodsley, who published it, as well as the *Vanity of Human Wishes* and *Rasselas*. Dodsley also first suggested the *Dictionary* to Johnson, and was one of the syndicate that published it.

12. 8. A second edition ... See B. 39.

12. 16. not long be concealed ... Sir Joshua Reynolds relates that Pope said: 'He will soon be *déterré*.' Pope, according to Boswell, after he had 'exhumed' the author of *London*, and had heard that he needed a M.A. degree in order to accept the offer of the mastership of a school (probably Appleby, not far from Lichfield), asked Earl Gower (as a great midland county landowner) to interest himself in the matter, and, as an Oxford degree was 'too great a favour to be asked,' Earl Gower wrote to a friend of Dean Swift's begging him to 'write to Dean Swift, to persuade the University of Dublin to send a diploma constituting this poor man (Johnson) Master of Arts in their University.' It was a very roundabout proceeding, and it is not easy to understand why Pope did not himself write to Swift. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the attempt failed. About the same time Johnson 'made one other effort to emancipate himself from the drudgery of authorship.' He made enquiries whether 'a person might be permitted to practice as advocate' without a degree. But here too the attempt failed—perhaps, again, fortunately, although, some 40 years later, he was much agitated, and in an angry tone exclaimed, 'Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late!' when at the death of Lord Lichfield, Sir W. Scott had remarked to him, 'What a pity it is, sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law. You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and have attained to the peerage and had the title of Lichfield, your native city' (B. 475). Another attempt, made about the same time—to publish a translation of Paolo Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*—also failed.

12. 28. Boyse (Samuel, 1708-49), wrote *The Deity* (a poem praised by Fielding), and did translations of Fénelon, etc., modern versions of Chaucer, contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, etc. In the *Essays* (p. 31) Macaulay speaks of him 'wearing paper cravats because his linen was in pawn.' According to Cibber, from whose *Lives of the Poets* Macaulay derives his information, Boyse was often in such distress that he not only cut white paper into slips and tied it round his wrists and neck to supply the want of a shirt, but 'frequently appeared abroad with the additional inconvenience of want of breeches.' (See Macaulay's *Essay* and note by Mr. Winch.)

12. 33. Hoole. This is not John Hoole, the poet and dramatist, who translated Tasso and Ariosto, and with whom Johnson afterwards was intimate (severely criticised by Macaulay in his *Essay on Addison*, p. 705), but his uncle. John Hoole told Johnson that he had been educated by his 'uncle, who was a tailor.' Johnson replied: 'Sir, I knew him. We called him the *metaphysical tailor*. He was of a Club in Old Street, with me and George Psalmanazar, and some others.' On enquiry the poet allowed that his uncle was 'too mathematical, and used to draw squares and triangles on his shopboard, so that he did not excel in the cut of a coat' (B. 597).

12. 36. George Psalmanazar. For this extraordinary impostor one should consult the *Encycl. Brit.* or Dr. Hill's *Appendix* (3. 443). He was a Frenchman, born about 1679, probably in Languedoc, and educated perhaps in a Jesuit College. Having discovered a talent for imposture, he travelled through Germany and the Netherlands in the character of a Japanese convert to Catholicism. At Sluys he met a clergyman of the English Church who was 'chaplain to a Scotch regiment in the pay of the Dutch' (a queer mixture!), and this man, Innes, who was his equal in roguery, if not in the art of imposture, took him over to England and introduced him to the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, as a Formosan candidate for conversion to the Anglican Church. He was duly converted and baptised, and translated for the Bishop the Catechism into what he called Formosan—but what was pure jargon. He excited great enthusiasm among the orthodox, who subscribed heavily to send him to Oxford for further initiation, and (as he afterwards confessed) he for many years lived on the money subscribed by his pious dupes. In 1704 he published a *Description of Formosa* (at the instigation of Innes), partly compiled from former descriptions; but he ventured on such audacious statements as that in the Formosan Academies Greek was studied, and that 18,000 boys were yearly sacrificed in the island. But the most wondrous part of this 18th century de Rougemont's career remains to be told. In 1728—after some 30 years of successful imposture—he was, according to his version, 'converted' in a better sense of the word by Law's *Serious Call* (by which Johnson himself was much influenced (see above, p. 5, l. 19), and at last made a clean breast of it. Whether the prospect of inevitable exposure may not have conduced to his change of front quite as much as the *Serious Call*, and whether his talent for imposture may not have scored as great a success in the latter as it did in the first part of his career, are questions not easy to answer. However that may be, he lived for many years in the odour of sanctity. He made in his *Memoirs* a professedly full confession. He showed, according to Johnson, as reported by Mrs. Thrale, 'a piety, penitence, and virtue,

exceeding almost what we read as wonderful in the lives of the saints.' How intensely Johnson revered him is apparent from his having longed to resemble him in 'purity and devotion,' and from the assertion that he would have 'as soon thought of contradicting a bishop' as George Psalmanazar. For about 20 years he and Johnson were close friends. He died in May, 1763, a few days before Boswell and Johnson became acquainted. His real name was never discovered. At the end of his *Appendix*, Dr. Hill quotes (and other editors have quoted from him, apparently *au grand sérieux*), the following April hoax which appeared in the first edition of the *Spectator* (in 1711, I suppose):

'On the first of April will be performed at the Play-house in the Haymarket an opera called *The Cruelty of Atreus*. N.B. The Scene wherein Thyestes eats his own children is to be performed by the famous Mr. Psalmanazar, lately arrived from Formosa: The whole Supper being set to Kettle-drums.'

13. 3. at an alehouse. Boswell once asked Johnson if he ever 'sought after' the company of anyone, and suggested the novelist Richardson; to which Johnson replied, 'Yes, Sir. But I sought after George Psalmanazar the most. I used to go and sit with him at an alehouse in the city.' This alehouse was probably the club in Old Street mentioned above, under **Hoole**. Psalmanazar lived in Ironmonger Row, Old Street (B. 477).

13. 5. Richard Savage (1698-1743) was a man of no ordinary intellect, and in this respect worthy of Johnson as his friend and biographer. For his antecedents and his extraordinary career, see B. 55-57; Sir Leslie Stephen's *Johnson*, 29-32; Professor Morley's *First Sketch*, 852. He claimed to be the illegitimate son of the Countess of Macclesfield and Earl Rivers; but his reputed mother did not acknowledge him, and treated him with the greatest hatred and contempt, asserting that her child had died, and that a shoemaker with whom her child had been placed had substituted his own in its stead. He led a very wild life, and in 1727, in a drunken brawl, stabbed a man named Sinclair and was convicted of murder. The Countess of Macclesfield seems to have done all she could to get him hung, but he was pardoned—at the intercession, it is said, of Lord Tyrconnel, her nephew, who, for a time at least, recognised Savage's claims and gave him a pension and took him into his house. Moreover, for some years he received a bounty of £50 from Queen Caroline. But his character, as Boswell says, was 'marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude.' He quarrelled with his friends and sank ever lower; and when at Queen Caroline's death (1737) he had lost his only means of livelihood, his friends persuaded him to leave London and settle in Wales. [He is, in all probability the *Thales* of Johnson's *London*, though

the dates do not seem to quite fit in. See H. i. 125 n.] On attempting to return, he was arrested at Bristol for debt, 'died in prison, and was buried at the expense of his gaoler' (Aug. 1743). Among his writings are: *The Wanderer*, a 'moral poem'; *The progress of a divine*, a satirical poem; and *The Bastard*, a violent attack on the Countess of Macclesfield.

13. 7. **blue ribbon**: the dark blue ribbon worn by the Knights of the Garter.

13. 27. **Prime Minister**. Sir Robert Walpole was Prime Minister from 1721 to 1742, when he was 'banished to the House of Lords' as Earl of Orford. Johnson himself says that Walpole indulged in loose talk at table in order that 'all could join' (B. 373). He also says that Savage described a prominent personage (probably Walpole) thus: 'The whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity' (H. 3. 57. n).

14. 4. **Grub Street**: now called Milton Street; in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, between Fore Street and Chiswell Street. It was at one time, as Johnson says in his *Dictionary*, 'much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems,' whence, he adds, 'any mean production is called *Grub Street*.' Macaulay (*Essay*, p. 34) calls Johnson 'the last survivor of the genuine race of Grub Street hacks.' Johnson told Frances Burney that he had never visited Grub Street, and proposed that they should 'visit the mansions of their progenitors' together.

14. 9. **discerning critic**. Boswell tells how Sir Joshua Reynolds (who did not know Johnson till about ten years later) read the book through standing, with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece; 'and when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed,' so strongly had the account 'seized his attention.' See also the quotation from the *Champion* (B. 53, 54).

14. 17. **supercilious Warburton** was at this time, what Johnson afterwards became, the 'Great Cham' of literature, and was likened to Shakespeare's 'Colossus.' Johnson (T. 51) gives Warburton's career—how he was at first an antagonist to Pope, but, recognising in him the rising man, defended his *Essay on Man* against Crousaz (the Lausanne professor), and how Pope introduced him to Allen, and Allen married him to his rich niece (the heiress of Prior Park) and how he thus became Bishop of Gloucester (1759). He also speaks of his 'contempt of mankind' (T. 60). In his controversy with Warburton, Lord Bolingbroke addressed to him a pamphlet: 'To the most impudent man living' (H. 1. 329). Warburton published an Edition of Shakespeare in 1747, in which he poured out his

contempt on his predecessors as 'absolutely below serious notice, if you except some Critical Notes on Macbeth, given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as it appears, by a man of parts and genius' (B. 57). These Notes were written by Johnson in 1745.

14. 19. **several eminent booksellers.** The idea, says Boswell, was suggested (B. 50) to him 'several years before this period' by his publisher, Dodsley, who, with Messrs. Hitch (Hawes?), Millar, Knapton, and Longman, combined to employ him. But thirty years afterwards Johnson said that he had 'long thought of it,' before Dodsley mentioned it (B. 513).

14. 24. **several poor men.** 'And let it be remembered,' exclaims Boswell, 'by the natives of North Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them (out of six) were of that country.' The fee was really £1575, and it is said that by mistake he received £100 too much. On the other hand, his Scotch amanuenses occasioned him the loss of £20 by writing 'copy' on both sides of the paper (B. 61, 62).

14. 27. **the Earl of Chesterfield** was Viceroy in Ireland in 1745-6, and Secretary of State in 1746-8. As a politician he seems to have shown ability (see Sir L. Stephen, p. 48), and was, as Macaulay says in his *Essay on Chatham*, 'an orator, a courtier, a wit, and a man of letters ... at the head of *ton* in days when, in order to be at the head of *ton*, it was not sufficient to be dull and supercilious.' His wit Johnson has derided, and 'I thought,' he said, 'that this man had been a Lord among wits; but I find that he is only a wit among Lords.' As a 'man of letters,' he is mainly remarkable—notorious perhaps—for his *Letters to his Son*, of which Johnson most justly said that they teach the morals of a courtesan and the manners of a dancing-master. Chesterfield's description of Johnson was 'an absurd person' and 'a respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat.'¹ As is perhaps natural, Chesterfield's *Letters* are much appreciated by French *littérateurs*.

15. 6. **call on his patron.** See B. 85. It was this experience of patrons that made Johnson substitute the word 'patron' for 'garret' in the passage of his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, which originally stood thus:

'There mark what ills the scholar's life assail—
Toil, envy, want, the garret, and the jail.'

Boswell quotes these lines inaccurately. (See H. I. 264. In the Globe Edition, p. 87, it seems to have been corrected.) In his *Dictionary* Johnson defined a *patron* as 'commonly a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery.'

¹This description was 'generally understood to be meant for Johnson' (B. 89), but see my note to *Life of Goldsmith*, 17. 27.

15. 16. the *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Probably written in 1748; most of it, if not all (B. 63), at Hampstead, to which place he 'resorted occasionally' in order to visit his wife, who had lodgings there 'for the sake of the country air.' In 1749 Johnson also started a club which met at a 'famous beefsteak house' in Ivy Lane. This was the forerunner of the celebrated *Literary Club*, for which see Index.

15. 17. *Tenth Satire of Juvenal*. An annotated edition of Johnson's *London and Vanity of Human Wishes* can be procured for threepence. They should be read and compared carefully with the 3rd and 10th Satires of Juvenal— if possible with the original. Time and energy will be far better thus expended than on grubbing amongst biographical details and allusions to things and persons of no importance. It is as stepping-stones to an acquaintance with what is great in literature that such literary characters as Johnson and Boswell are of use.

Johnson uses the scheme of Juvenal's Satire, and substitutes modern examples. Starting from the text that few can distinguish what is really good from evil in the disguise of good, Juvenal cites cases to show how the gifts of prayed-for power, glory, length of days, and beauty have often proved fatal, and the source of misery to its possessor. Among his examples are Sejanus (the notorious minister of the Emperor Tiberius), Demosthenes, Cicero, Hannibal, Alexander, and Xerxes. 'Shall men,' he asks, 'then pray for nought?' 'If you wish my advice,' he answers, 'you will leave it to the gods to decide what is best and most profitable for us; for instead of what is merely pleasant they will give us what is for our real good. Man is dearer to heaven than to himself. Led on by impulse and by blind and extravagant desires, we entreat the gods for a wife and for offspring; but heaven alone knows what kind of children and what kind of wife we are destined to have. Still, in order that you may have *something* to beg for, *something* for which to offer vows and sacrifices, make this your prayer: A healthy mind in a healthy body (*Mens sana in corpore sano*).' In a few vigorous lines he then describes, from the Stoics' point of view, what he means by a healthy and well-balanced mind, and tells us that we can all attain that virtue 'through which lies the only path of a tranquil life.' I have before me two verse translations of this Satire, one by Dryden and the other (1802) by Gifford (the first editor of the *Quarterly Review*). They are probably the best that exist in English, but they both give about the same idea of the original as a sculptor would give of Apollo if he represented him in Johnsonian costume and a wig. Juvenal's twenty lines, splendid in their naked vigour, are padded out with half as many more, and arranged in the monotonous sing-song of riming couplets. Even Johnson's 'imitation,' being simply what it professes to be, is preferable to such caricatures.

The following is Gifford's version of the first 4½ lines of the concluding passage of the Satire. The first couplet is meant to correspond to Juvenal's four words: *Nil ergo optabunt homines?*

'Say, then, shall man, deprived all power of choice,
Ne'er raise to Heaven the supplicating voice?
Not so; but to the gods his fortune trust:
Their thoughts are wise, their dispensations just:
What best may profit or delight they know,
And real good for fancied bliss bestow;
With eyes of pity they our frailties scan;
More dear to them than to himself is man.'

15. 18. **whether the palm...** Everyone capable of fairly comparing Johnson and Juvenal has a right to form an opinion on this point. It may not be easy, or indeed possible, to give reasons—it certainly is not for the reason that Garrick gives, viz. that Johnson's poem is as 'hard as Greek'—but the fact remains that very many readers find the greatest difficulty in wading through the *Vanity of Human Wishes*—the mere thought of which makes them yawn—while they cannot take up Juvenal's Satire without being carried away once more by its splendid eloquence.

15. 24. **white bull:** really 'whitened' (Lat. *erctatus*, 'chalked'). The white bull is to be publicly sacrificed as a thanksgiving for the escape of the Emperor from the plots of Sejanus, who had already poisoned the son and mother of Tiberius, and was evidently aiming at seizing the imperial power. As a perfectly white bull was not always to be found, they sometimes chalked the animal (and gilded its horns). 'Candidates' were likewise so called because they wore 'whitened' togas.

15. 30. **his advantages.** Johnson had of course the immense advantage of being acquainted with the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer; and the mere words 'love,' 'faith,' 'patience,' and 'resignation,' are like jewels that can never lose their beauty and value, however worthless the setting. Johnson's concluding passage compared with that of Juvenal is like some structure overloaded with heavy and fantastic rococo work compared with the temple of the Tiburtine Vesta; but one cannot deny a certain massive dignity to some of Johnson's verses. Although they are easily procurable, perhaps the reader will like to have them at hand in connexion with Macaulay's remarks.

'Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Inquirer, cease! petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear; nor deem Religion vain.

Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
 But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice,
 Safe in His power, whose eyes discern afar
 The secret ambush of a specious prayer ;
 Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
 Secure whate'er He gives, He gives the best.
 Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
 And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
 Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
 Obedient passions, and a will resign'd ;
 For love, which scarce collective man can fill ;
 For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;
 For faith, that panting for a happier seat
 Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat.
 These goods for man the laws of heaven ordain,
 These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain ;
 With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
 And makes the happiness she does not find.'

15. 32. *Charles* : i.e. Charles XII. of Sweden, who waged wars with the Poles, Danes, Prussians, Russians, and Norwegians. He forced Frederick of Denmark to capitulate and Alexander of Poland to resign. In 1706 he was defeated at Pultowa by Peter the Great, and took refuge with the Sultan. In 1718, while attacking a fortress in Norway, he was killed by a musket-ball. Voltaire wrote his life. Boswell says that Johnson here gives 'as highly finished a picture as possibly can be conceived.' Macaulay was a brilliant scholar, and his intimacy with literature was extensive and extraordinarily minute, but he himself confessed that he was 'not successful in analysing the effect of works of genius,' and that he had 'never written a page of criticism on poetry or the fine arts that he would not burn if he had the power.' What he says here may have been his sincere opinion ; but I believe that he had no strong feeling on the subject, and that he prefers Johnson's Charles to Juvenal's Hannibal merely for the sake of variety—of a little chiaroscuro in his picture. To most readers Juvenal's Hannibal seems incomparably the finer portrait of the two. Johnson's final couplet is perhaps the best thing in his description :

'He left a name, at which the world grew pale,
 To point a moral, or adorn a tale.'

It almost holds its own against Juvenal's :

*'I demens et curre per Alpes,
 ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.'*

15. 33. *vigorous and pathetic enumeration.* The best of these lines are quoted above on p. 15, l. 6. The passage offers us a kind of Waxwork Exhibition of personified Abstractions, such

as Virtue, Truth, Science, Reason, Doubt, Novelty, Sloth, Beauty, Disease, Melancholy, Art, Genius, etc., etc., whereas Juvenal in much fewer lines, and with the simplest and directest language, vividly pictures the fate of the two great orators of antiquity.

16. 5. **David Garrick.** See 7. 12 and 28. 17. 'Some of the characters (in the *Rambler*) are believed to have been actually drawn from the life, particularly that of Prospero from Garrick, who never entirely forgave its pointed satire' (B. 71). 'The character of Prospero was, beyond all question, occasioned by Garrick's ostentatious display of furniture and Dresden china' (Murphy's *Johnson*). 'If Garrick was aimed at,' says Dr. Hill, 'it is surprising that the severity of the satire did not bring to an end, not only all friendship, but even all acquaintance between the two men.' Prospero is to be found in *Rambler*, No. 200. He is a type of the successful man, who treats with bland but insufferable superiority his old friend, with whom he had started penniless in the world.

Johnson's opinion of *players*--which was probably somewhat due to pique at the failure of his one attempt at play-writing--was not such as to make matters easier for Garrick. 'Players, sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.' 'Merit, sir! what merit? Do you *respect* a rope-dancer or a ballad-singer? What, sir! a fellow who claps a hump on his back and a lump on his leg, and cries, *I am Richard the Third?*' (B. 322, 425). When asked by Boswell if he did not admire Garrick, he said: 'Yes, as "a poor player who frets and struts his hour upon the stage"--as a shadow. . . . Many of Shakespeare's plays are the worse for being acted' (B. 204). To Boswell's remark that Sheridan had a 'singular talent of exhibiting character,' Johnson replied: 'Sir, that is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from' (B. 205). On one occasion Foote intended to imitate Johnson on the stage. Johnson asked Davies, the bookseller, the price of an ordinary oak stick, and finding that it was sixpence, resolved to expend a shilling on one of 'double quantity.' Davies acquainted Foote with the fact, 'which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic' (B. 284). It should, however, be noticed that Johnson claimed a monopoly of abuse and ridicule in regard to his old pupil, of whom he often spoke with pride and admiration--especially after Garrick's death. Later in life he seems to have had more respect for players. He was on very friendly terms with Mrs. Siddons and John Kenble.

16. 31. **brought Irene out.** 'In this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with so much

study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years (1738-49) of Horace, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor' (B. 64). Johnson was at first very obstinate. 'Sir,' said he, 'the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels.' The play 'went off tolerably,' reported one of the audience (Dr. Adams), 'till it came to the conclusion, when the heroine was to be strangled upon the stage,¹ and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out *Murder! Murder!* She several times attempted to speak, but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive.' Johnson, as Boswell remarks, was wise enough to make no further attempt in dramatic composition. Garrick's comment was that 'when Johnson writes tragedy, declamation roars and passion sleeps.' Even Dr. Hill sadly allows that *Irene* was a failure, and that, while Addison's *Cato* had added 'at least eight habitual quotations to the language, *Irene* has perhaps not added a single one.'

17. 3. blank verse. He had a very low opinion of what he contemptuously called 'blank' (B. 145, 533), though he allowed its appropriateness in the case of Milton and Young. Both Gray and Goldsmith shared his feeling (H. I. 427 n). Johnson's depreciatory remarks on blank verse in connexion with Milton's well-known comments on rime (see Johnson's *Life of Milton*) apply with much force to his own *Irene*, but show an entire want of ear for the music of Miltonic and Shakespearean blank verse. Though (in the *Rambler*) he speaks of 'noble and majestic pauses,' in the *Life* he asserts that the true music of English heroic verse 'can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rime,' whereas 'the variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer.' It is the total absence of all such phrasing as Milton's or Beethoven's that reduces Johnson's blank verse to the dull, monotonous see-saw of rimeless heroic couplets. Passages from *Irene* will be found quoted B. 33 and 78. A full discussion of Johnson's theories on blank verse is given by Dr. Hill 4. 42 n (B. 542).

17. 12. Tatler: a penny paper, appearing thrice weekly, containing a little news and a good deal of light and jocular writing, was begun by Steele in 1709. 'It was not until 80 numbers had appeared and its success was complete, that Addison became a contributor' (Morley). On the decease of the *Tatler* (Jan. 1711) the *Spectator* took its place, and was conducted successfully by

¹ This violation of Horace's rule that 'Medea must not butcher her children in the view of the audience' was suggested by Garrick.

Steele and Addison until Dec. 1712, when, not being able to contend against the new stamp-duty, it ceased to appear. In 1714 Addison revived it, but only for about six months.

17. 15. the *Censor*, etc., were continuations of the *Lay Monastery*. Johnson mentions the *Plain Dealer* (published 1724) as containing an account of Savage; and in 1744 Boswell quotes from the *Champion* (B. 49, 57 n, 54). A 'Tatler Revived' came on the scene just before the *Rambler*, but was only, says Boswell, 'born to die' (B. 66).

17. 22. the *Rambler*. 'When I was to begin publishing that paper, I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. The "*Rambler*" seemed the best that occurred, and I took it.' Boswell gives a long account of the *Rambler* (B. 66-72).

17. 26. *Richardson* (Samuel, 1689-1761) the predecessor of Henry Fielding (see on 8. 7) may be regarded as the father of the English novel—as distinguished from mere narrative, such as Defoe's. His chief works are *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe* (which consists mainly of letters) and *Sir Charles Grandison*. 'There is more knowledge of the heart,' said Johnson, 'in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*,' and on his *Speech on Copyright* Macaulay asserted that 'no writings, those of Shakespeare excepted, show more profound knowledge of the human heart' than those of Richardson. As might be expected, Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield found them 'deplorably tedious.' Richardson was one of the very few contributors to the *Rambler* (B. 66).

17. 28. *Young* (Edward, 1681-1765). 'Some of the more solemn papers, I doubt not, particularly attracted the notice of Dr. Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*... I have seen volumes of Dr. Young's copy of the *Rambler* in which he has marked the passages which he thought particularly excellent by folding down a corner of the page; and such as he rated in a supereminent degree are marked by double folds' (B. 71; see also B. 549). Johnson was much pleased at this 'minute attention.' One wonders what Richard de Bury would have said to it.

17. 28. *Hartley* (David, 1705-1757) was a disciple of the school of (so called) philosophy which teaches that the physical movements of the brain produce thought—that matter in motion is the cause of mind. [Modern 'monism' tries to solve the question by the quibble that matter in motion is mind.] Hartley gave up Orders and took to medicine. His *magnum opus* is *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, his Expectations*.

17. 29. *George Bubb*, alias Bubb Doddington, was a well-known tuft-hunter of the day. He got into Parliament and

somehow secured a title as Baron Melcombe, and became 'confidential adviser' to Frederick, Prince of Wales, who, ever since the death of his mother Queen Caroline, in 1737, had been at feud with his father George II., and had taken up his residence in Leicester House (in Leicester Square). About a year after what Macaulay here relates (*i.e.* in 1751) Prince Frederick died, and his son George became Prince of Wales.

18. 1. *patronage*. See on p. 15, l. 6.

18. 5. *coldly received*. See B. 68. Dr. Hill quotes from Frances Burney, who says 'The *Ramblers* certainly were little noticed at first... When I went into Norfolk in 1751 I found but one person who knew anything of them. Before I left Norfolk, in the year 1760, they were in high favour among persons of learning and good taste. Others there were, devoid of both, who said that the *hard words* in the *Rambler* were used by the author to render his *Dictionary* indispensably necessary.' Among these 'hard words' were *equiponderant* and *adscititious*, 'both in one sentence.' One of the critics not devoid of learning and taste seems to have been Tetty. After a few numbers of the *Rambler* had come out, she said to her husband: 'I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to *this*.'

18. 18. *monotonous...turgid*. 'The *Rambler*,' says Sir L. Stephen, 'marks the culminating period of Johnson's worst qualities of style.' 'As it was entirely the work of one man,' says Boswell, 'there was, of course, such an uniformity in its texture as very much to exclude the charm of variety... The style has been censured by some shallow critics as involved and turgid...' (B. 68, 72). According to Boswell, it was Johnson's object to express familiar thoughts in what he calls 'philosophical' language, and he evidently thinks this a process superior to that of Socrates, who, as he says, 'reduced philosophy to the simplicity of common life.' Parodies of the *Rambler* appeared. Boswell mentions one 'mock *Rambler*.' For a good account of Johnson's style see M. Arnold's *Introd.* to six of Johnson's *Lives* (Macmillan), and Macaulay's *Essay on Boswell's Johnson*, p. 49, and below on 27. 19.

18. 25. *Addison and Johnson*. This question was discussed by Boswell—with considerable acumen, but with, of course, some prejudice—just about 'seventy years' before Macaulay wrote these words. He likens Addison's style to a light wine which 'pleases everybody from the first,' and Johnson's to a liquor of more body which 'seems too strong at first, but by degrees is highly relished' (B. 74). Johnson himself says of Addison: 'What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic... Whoever wishes to attain an

English style familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.'

18. 32. **are known to everybody.** A faint echo of Macaulay's old formulae, such as, 'Every schoolboy knows who imprisoned Montezuma and who strangled Atahualpa' (*Essay on Clive*, p. 1), 'Every schoolgirl knows...' (*Essay on Boswell*, p. 2), etc. Perhaps when Macaulay was writing, about the middle of last century, 'everybody,' more or less, was acquainted with Addison's *Essays*. Nowadays they are well known to but few except professional litterateurs and examination candidates—although the names of Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Honeycomb, etc., survive in a semi-fossilized state in many 'highly cultivated minds.' Selections from the *Spectator* are published (with notes) in the present Series, and in the *Golden Treasury*.

18. 34. These characters may be found, if desired, in the *Rambler*, Nos. 22, 61, 138, 142, 161, 186, etc. Quisquilius is cited by Boswell ('a Virtuoso,' B. 71) among the 'instances of fertility of fancy.' Venustus is one of the lovers of Tranquilla (119 and 126). *Annigail and Anut* is a story of Eskimo lovers who were drowned when searching for each other.

19. 3. **three days later.** Boswell gives the date¹ as the 17th of March, O.S. (Old Style), and the *Rambler* is known to have ceased on Saturday, the 14th, O.S.; but some confusion has been caused by Boswell twice giving the latter date wrongly (*i.e.* B. 66 and B. 76, where, however, it has been corrected in the Globe Edition). For Johnson's wife, see notes on p. 6 and 18. 5.

19. 7. **superfluities.** This seems to have no foundation except the story of the 'Hampstead lodgings.' See on 6. 31 and 15. 16.

19. 8. **all his affection.** Boswell was very angry with Sir John Hawkins for asserting that Johnson's affection for his wife was a 'lesson that he had learned by rote.' There can be no doubt that, in spite of a little temporary friction, 'his love for his wife was of the most ardent kind, and during the long period of fifty years (1735-1784) was unimpaired by the lapse of time' (B. 77).

19. 11. **the Gunnings:** two famous Irish beauties, daughters of John Gunning of Castlecoote, Roscommon. Maria became Countess of Coventry, and Elizabeth became Duchess of Hamilton.

19. 11. **Lady Mary,** *i.e.* Lady Mary Wortley Montague, daughter of the Duke of Kingston; married Addison's friend

¹ This is March 28th, N.S. (See extract from Johnson's diary of 1753 given B. 77). The change of style was made Sept. 1752, and at the beginning of 1753 Johnson wrote: 'Jan. 1. N.S., which I shall always use for the future.'

Edward Wortley Montague, and went with him (1716) to Constantinople, where he was ambassador. After their return they lived near Pope at Twickenham. In 1739 she left her husband (though they corresponded) and lived abroad for about 20 years. In 1762 she returned to England, and died in the same year. Her letters were published after her death. A full and authorised edition by her grandson appeared in 1803. She corresponded with Pope, but quarrelled with him, and the quarrel took the form of satirical verse. In his *Essay on Addison* Macaulay speaks of the 'brilliant Mary Montague' (p. 719).

19. 12. **her opinion:** 'in whose judgment and taste he had great confidence' (B. 69). See also on 18. 5.

19. 14. 'The *Monthly Reviewers*,' said Johnson, 'are Christians with as little Christianity as may be, and are for pulling down all establishments. The *Critical Reviewers* are for supporting the constitution both in Church and State.' The *Monthly* and the *Critical* were rival Reviews, respectively Whig and Tory. Smollett, the novelist, was an editor of the *Critical*, and Johnson wrote for it. To the king (B. 186) he said 'the *Monthly* was done with most care, the *Critical* on the best principles.'

19. 20. **doggedly.** 'Nay (said Dr. Johnson) a man may write at any time, if he will set himself *doggedly* to it' (T. 22 and 73). Boswell appends a note: 'This word is commonly used to signify *sullenly*, *gloomily*; and in that sense alone it appears in Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary*. I suppose he meant by it: with an *obstinate resolution*, similar to that of a sullen man.' See also B. 66, where Boswell uses the word with reference to Johnson's unflagging work at the *Rambler*. The meaning of 'dogged' seems rather to be 'pertinacious, like a bull-dog.'

19. 22. **at length complete.** 'When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Millar (the publisher) returned, Johnson asked him; 'Well, what did he say?' 'Sir (answered the messenger), he said, thank God I have done with him.' 'I am glad (replied Johnson with a smile) that he thanks God for anything' (B. 95).

19. 31. **The World:** appeared from Jan., 1753, to Dec., 1765. Soame Jenyns, Horace Walpole, and Lord Chesterfield were among its contributors. The two articles on the *Dictionary* by Lord Chesterfield were published on Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 1754. In 1753 and 1754 Johnson had 'relieved the drudgery of his *Dictionary* and the melancholy of his grief' by contributing a series of papers to a periodical called *The Adventurer* (B. 83).

19. 34. **warmly praised.** Johnson's comment was: 'Sir, after making great professions, he had for many years taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out he fell a-scrib-

bling in *The World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter ...' (B. 86).

The following extracts will show the drift of Lord Chesterfield's articles :

'I think the public in general, and the republic of letters in particular, are greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson for having undertaken and executed so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man, but if we are to judge by the various works of Mr. Johnson,' etc. ...

'It must be owned that our language is at present in a state of anarchy ... The time for discrimination seems to be now come ... Toleration, adoption, and naturalization have run their lengths. Good order and authority are now necessary. But where shall we find them, and at the same time the obedience due to them? We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of danger, and choose a dictator. Upon this principle I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare, that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship. Nay more, I will not only obey him like an old Roman, as my dictator, but like a modern Roman I will implicitly believe in him as my Pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair—but no longer.'

It is evident that Lord Chesterfield had not seen the last number of the *Rambler*, in which Johnson poured out the vials of his contempt on patrons and stated plainly : 'having laboured to maintain the dignity of virtue, I will not now degrade it by the meanness of dedication.'

20. 7. a letter given in full by Boswell (B. 87). The following extracts will perhaps suffice :

'I have been lately informed by the proprietor of *The World* that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

'When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address.

'Seven years, my Lord, have now past since I waited in your outward rooms or was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before, ...

‘Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it.

‘Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

‘My Lord,
 ‘Your Lordship’s most humble,
 ‘Most obedient Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.’

20. 14. **Horne Tooke**: *i.e.* Parson Horne. He was fined and imprisoned for signing a public advertisement asking for subscriptions for the widows and orphans of ‘our beloved American fellow-subjects inhumanly murdered by the King’s troops.’ Johnson at first (B. 477) said he should be put in the pillory for it (as the Attorney General Thurlow also thought, observing that mere imprisonment would be ‘a slight inconvenience to one of such sedentary habits’) but afterwards hoped ‘they didn’t put the dog in the pillory for his libel; he has too much literature for that.’ From prison Horne wrote the *Letter to Mr. Dunning* (afterwards enlarged to the *Diversions of Purley*), in which he says ‘I could never read his preface without tears.’ At the same time he severely criticised Johnson’s etymologies, and Johnson had the good sense to say that he would adopt his corrections in any new edition (B. 494).

The passages to which Macaulay alludes are probably:

‘The *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.’ ... ‘I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.’

Later in life Johnson confessed that he had been ‘agreeably mistaken’ in regard to the pleasure that his work had caused him, and in 1773, although no longer in need of pot-boiling jobs, wished to undertake a new edition of Chambers’ *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*. ‘I like that muddling work,’ he said.

20. 20. **hailed with an enthusiasm.** Boswell speaks of its 'great fame' (B. 101). In course of time it certainly 'raised Johnson's fame,' so that Boswell regarded 'Dictionary Johnson' as a title not less glorious than 'Scipio Africanus'; but at first most of the praise seems to have come from abroad, whence the Florentine Cruscan Academy and the French Academy sent him their Dictionaries. In a letter to Mr. Burney, written two years and eight months after the publication of his *Dictionary*, he says: 'Praise has been very scarce... Yours is the only letter of good-will that I have received, though, indeed, I am promised something of that sort from Sweden.' He also speaks contemptuously of 'coffee-house critics' as the only 'opponents' of his book, and, according to his theory, the success of a writer depends on the opposition he excites. ('Attack is reaction. I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds'... 'I would rather be attacked than unnoticed.') In the *Edinburgh Review* of 1755 (a shortlived precursor of the *Edinburgh Review* of 1802) Adam Smith wrote a notice of the *Dictionary*, which he said was of 'extraordinary merit'; but he criticised it rather freely.

20. 22. **The definitions...** 'A dictionary,' says Sir Leslie Stephen, 'such as Johnson conceived it, was work for a *harmless drudge*—the definition of a lexicographer given in the book itself. Etymology in a scientific sense was as yet non-existent... To collect all the words in the language,¹ to define their meanings as accurately as might be, to give the obvious, or whimsical guesses at, Etymology... and illustrative passages, was the sum of his ambition... The work could give no play either for the higher literary faculties or faculties of scientific investigation.' I do not understand what the writer means exactly by 'higher literary faculties,' but the faculties needed for really good definition are decidedly of a high grade—of a very much higher grade than those needed for the compilation of our modern 'scientific' dictionaries, however irreproachable their etymology may be. Boswell goes, perhaps, to the other extreme. 'The definitions,' he says, 'have always appeared to me such astonishing proof of acuteness of intellect and precision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank.' In his Preface Johnson says that it is the Explanation (Definition) of the words 'on which I expect malignity most frequently to fasten.' For some of his well-known definitions, see below, on 23. 25. A few errors were noted: both *windward* and *leeward* he described as 'towards to wind': *pastern* he explained as the 'knee of a horse.' His definition of *Network* has 'often been quoted,' says

¹ Johnson had hardly to do this, for he availed himself of the labours of former Lexicographers—an account of whom is given by Sir John Hawkins in his *Life of Johnson*, p. 171. Boswell says that the words were 'partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself' (B. 62. See also Bishop Percy's account given in the note).

Boswell, 'with sportive malignity.' It is: 'Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections' and not much progress is made by further defining 'reticulated' as 'made of network; formed with interstitial vacuities.' As has been often remarked, all this throws really not much more light on the matter than the Irishman's definition of a net, viz., a lot of holes tied together with string. In his Preface Johnson points out that real definition needs the use of terms *less* abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms are not always to be found, especially in the case of quite easy and common words; thus 'cow' is far more intelligible than a 'horned ruminant quadruped'—which may also mean a goat! (B. 98, 449).

20. 25. **a leisure hour.** 'One may read page after page of his *Dictionary* with improvement and pleasure' (B. 62).

20. 28. **wretched etymologist.** Even Boswell admits that Johnson's 'etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not entitled to the first praise.' See note on Horne Tooke, 20. 14.

20. 31. **Junius and Skinner.** Dr. Adams, finding Johnson busy at his *Dictionary*, said: 'This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies?' To which Johnson replied, 'Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welsh gentleman (Richards?), who has published a collection of Welsh proverbs' (B. 61). In his Preface he says, 'For the Teutonic etymologies I am commonly indebted to Junius and Skinner ...'

Francis Junius, the younger (b. 1589 at Heidelberg, d. 1678 at Windsor), wrote the *Etymologicum Anglicanum*, which was not published till 1743. Stephen Skinner, M.D. (1623-1667), wrote an *Etymologicum Linguae Anglicanae*. See also B. 228 for Johnson's remarks on Leibnitz and his attempt to trace 'all languages up to the Hebrew.' Johnson knew French and Italian for literary purposes, but only on one occasion, as far as I know, gave any sign of recognising the existence of the German language. Seeing that Lessing died three years before Johnson, and Goethe was his contemporary for 35 years, this ignorance seems a little ridiculous in a great English literary Dictator—who was indebted to a German for his English etymologies! But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that Germany had been desolated by the Thirty Years' War and by French influence, and that except the *Nibelungenlied* (which was not discovered till 1750) there was practically in Johnson's time no first class German literature.

20. 34. 'He had spent during the progress of the work the money for which he had contracted to write his *Dictionary*' (B. 101). See on 14. 24.

21. 3. **arrested.** This is stated by Malone in a note to *Johnson's Works*, v. 49. 'Johnson,' he says, 'appears to have been in this year in great pecuniary distress, having been arrested for debt; on which occasion Richardson became his surety.' In a letter to Richardson (given by Murphy in his *Life of Johnson*) Johnson states that he is 'under an arrest' for £5 18s., and begs for the sum which 'I will gratefully repay you and add it to all former obligations.' In another letter, dated a month earlier (Feb. 19, 1756), he speaks of 'the favour which you were pleased to do me two nights ago.' It seems therefore likely that he was 'under an arrest' at least twice; but the only address given in the letters is his house in Gough Square, so that he may not have been actually taken to the bailiff's. Macaulay's 'carried to spunging houses' is evidently founded on a lively anecdote of questionable authenticity (perhaps itself founded merely on these letters) which appeared in the *European Magazine*. 'I remember,' Johnson is recorded to have said, 'writing to Richardson from a spunging-house, and was so sure of my deliverance through his kindness and liberality, that before his reply was brought I knew I could afford to joke with the rascal who had me in custody, and did so over a pint of adulterated wine, for which I had no money to pay.' A *spunging-house* was the name of the bailiff's house where debtors were confined for a day before being taken to some debtors' prison or 'compter' (see *Essay*, p. 30).

21. 8. **abridged his Dictionary.** Boswell calls it 'an abstract, or epitome, in octavo of his folio *Dictionary*' (B. 102).

21. 9. **edition of Shakspeare.** See B. 107 and 171. This had been first proposed by him eleven years previously (1745), and was twice advertised in the *Gentleman's Magazine* at the same time as his *Observations on Macbeth*; but finding no support he had dropped the project. The actual 'Proposals' seem to have first appeared in 1756.

21. 11. **but he soon found ...** He undertook that it should be published by Christmas, 1757, then by March, 1758, and so on. It was not finished till nine years later. See 24. 23 and 25. 24.

21. 14. **Literary Magazine, or Universal Review,** 'the first number of which came out in May this year (1756).' Johnson 'superintended' it; but (says Murphy) 'this employment engrossed but little of his time. He resigned himself to indolence, took no exercise, rose about two (i.e. P.M.) and then received the visits of his friends ... gave responses in the chair of criticism and presided at his tea-table.' But somehow—how, even his intimate acquaintances were puzzled to tell—he got through a deal of work under such conditions. During the fifteen months of his connexion with this Magazine he contributed (according to

Boswell) five original Essays and about twenty-five reviews—the former on political questions ; one on Frederick the Great (called by him, or Boswell, Frederick III. not II.)—the latter on subjects as diverse as ‘Sir Isaac Newton’s *Arguments in proof of a Deity*,’ ‘The Case of Admiral Byng,’ ‘Experiments on Bleaching,’ and ‘Methods of Distilling Sea water and Curing an Ill Taste in Milk.’ His defence of Tea, which was directed against a depreciatory Essay on the subject by a Mr. Jonas Hanway, ought, according to Boswell (T. p. 9), to have ‘obtained him a magnificent reward from the East India Company.’ For Johnson’s tea-drinking see on 29. 29.

21. 17. **Jenyns’s Inquiry.** Macaulay (as also Sir L. Stephen and other literary authorities) agrees here with Boswell, who calls Johnson’s review ‘his most exquisite critical essay.’ What pleased both Macaulay and Boswell was, perhaps, its rather elephantine ‘satirical pleasantry,’ for neither had any pleasure in philosophy.¹ Moreover, Johnson himself, though interested in ethical speculations on their practical side, as Sir L. Stephen says, had no insight into real philosophy. As for the mystery of evil—a subject on which even Plato gives us but little guidance—it is very evident that Johnson does not even recognise what the real difficulty is. See his harangue (many years later) on the ‘consistency of moral evil with the power and goodness of God’ and his explanation of evil by the fact of human free will (T. 25 and 283). ‘Perceiving us to be delighted and satisfied,’ Boswell adds, ‘he concluded his harangue with an air of benevolent triumph over an objection which has distressed many worthy minds: “This then is the answer to the question, *πόθεν τὸ κακόν* ; (Whence is Evil ?).”’

21. 20. **the Idler** : a series of essays (April, 1758—April, 1760) which ‘came out every Saturday in a weekly newspaper called *The Universal Chronicle*, or *Weekly Gazette* (B. 109). During this period the newspaper changed its title and owner several times. Of the 103 Essays all but twelve were written by Johnson. Several were by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and were the first rough designs of his celebrated *Discourses on Painting*.

21. 22. **pirated** : ‘seized on with avidity by various publishers ... to enrich their publications.’ Johnson therefore inserted a long advertisement threatening reprisal. See B. 115 n.

21. 30. **contribute largely.** In his last letter to his dying mother (Jan. 13, 1759) he says, ‘I have got twelve guineas to

¹ Boswell’s pietistic reflexions and speculations hardly merit this name. ‘We must not think too deeply,’ he remarks. One may remark in passing that Macaulay had so little taste for what is of worth in philosophy as to value Plato’s dialogues merely for their literary excellence, and to talk of ‘the childish quibbling of Socrates.’

send you' (B. 113). Six of these he had been obliged to borrow from Allen the printer. A few days after her death he sent £20, 'which I thought to have brought to my mother; but God suffered it not.'

21. 31. In order to defray ... 'Mr. Strachan the printer told me that Johnson wrote it that with the profits he might defray the expenses of his mother's funeral and pay some little debts that she had left. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings on one week, sent it to press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over' (B. 14). Macaulay has not reproduced the last words quite accurately. The £20 mentioned in the last note was probably obtained as a pre-payment on the yet unwritten book, which appeared in April, about two months after his mother's death. Malone states that Johnson 'insisted on a part of the money being paid immediately, and accordingly received £70.' But the author of the *Life of Johnson* in his *Dictionary* (ed. 1786) says that he tried vainly to obtain £20 on the unfinished work in order to go to his dying mother, and that 'he sat down to comply with the book-seller's request, but before he had finished his mother died.'

21. 36. their bargain. The publishers gave him an extra £25 when the book reached a second edition. Johnson 'never understood the art of making the most of his productions.'

22. 2. Lydia Languish: the sentimental young woman of Sheridan's play *The Rivals*. The rivals for her hand are Bob Acres and Captain Absolute. It was a very 'accomplished lady' who observed to Boswell that *Rasselas* was 'an enlarged and more deeply philosophical discourse in prose' on the text of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

22. 6. Prince ... The word *Ras* means 'head,' 'chief.' Johnson took the name from Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia* (see on 6. 10).

22. 8. exactly where ... 'The plan of the book is simple ... There is supposed to be a happy valley in Abyssinia where the royal princes are confined in total seclusion, but with ample supplies for every conceivable want. Rasselas, who has been thus educated, becomes curious as to the outside world, and at last makes his escape with his sister, her attendant, and the ancient sage and poet, Imlac. Under Imlac's guidance they survey life and manners in various stations; they make the acquaintance of philosophers, statesmen, men of the world, and recluses; they discuss the results of their experience pretty much in the style of the *Rambler*; they agree to pronounce the sentence "Vanity of Vanities!" and finally in a "conclusion where nothing is concluded," they resolve to return to the happy valley. The book is little more than a set of essays upon life,

with just story enough to hold it together' (Sir L. Stephen). In comparing *Rasselas* with Voltaire's *Candide*—that 'incomparably more brilliant attack upon Optimism,' as Sir L. Stephen calls it, which appeared a few weeks before Johnson's book—Boswell remarks that Voltaire 'meant only by wanton profaneness to obtain a sportive victory over religion, and to discredit the belief of a superintending Providence,' whereas Johnson 'meant to direct the hopes of man to things eternal.' But the pessimistic tendency (what Boswell perhaps better calls the 'morbid melancholy') of Johnson's book is depressing—and that not only to believers in the so-called progress of humanity, and the evolution of the Uebermensch. (For *Rasselas* the student should consult *Rasselas* itself, and for Johnson's pessimism he might turn to Sir L. Stephen's *Life of Johnson*.)

22. 10. **The Monthly Review** ... See on 19. 14.

22. 14. a **waiting-woman**: the attendant of the princess, Pekuah by name. Of Johnson's female characters Macaulay says, 'Surely Sir John Falstaff himself did not wear his petticoats with a worse grace. The reader may well cry out with honest Sir Hugh Evans: "I like not when a 'oman has a great pearld. I spy a great pearld under her muffler.'" (By the way, Mr. Aldis Wright tells me that the reading of the folios is 'his muffler.' But surely this must be a misprint.)

22. 31. **Newton** discovered the law of gravitation during the reign of Charles II., but it was not published till 1687.

22. 34. **Bruce's Travels**. Johnson on one occasion met James Bruce the Abyssinian explorer, whose 'extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation' (B. 297). He seems not to have quite believed Bruce's travellers' tales. This was in 1775. Bruce was in Abyssinia about two years. He discovered the source of the Blue Nile in 1770. I am not sure whether the story of African natives who sliced beefsteaks from living cows has ever been actually confirmed (*fish* is thus treated by the Chinese, I think), but I myself once came across a savage tribe in Central Africa, to the north of Nyassa, where the practice prevailed of tearing an animal hastily to pieces and devouring the flesh and entrails raw while yet hot and quivering, a proceeding that I witnessed more than once after shooting a zebra or antelope.

22. 36. **into philosophers**. The following is a good example of the philosophising to be found in *Rasselas*. It is a cut, such as Johnson loved to give, at the 'cant' of 'natural philosophy' proclaimed by Rousseau and his school. 'The way to be happy,' says one of these sages at a meeting attended by the Abyssinian Prince, 'is to live according to nature. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle defi-

nitions or intricate ratiocinations. Let him learn to be wise by easier means : let him observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove ; let him consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct ; they obey their guide and are happy.' And when the Prince asks for rather more definite advice, his preceptor continues : 'To live according to nature is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects ... to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.' It was hardly surprising that 'the Prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer.' Perhaps the best-known passage of the *Rasselas* is that in which the poet-sage, Imlac, describes the 'business of a poet,' until he is interrupted by the Prince with the exclamation : 'Enough ! Thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet.'

23. 1. **Burke** (Edmund, 1729-97) began his career by writing two philosophical works, the first a satirical piece (*Vindication of Natural Society*) directed against Bolingbroke and the new French school, and the second his celebrated *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), much admired by Johnson.

23. 2. **Mrs. Lennox**, mentioned several times by Boswell, wrote the *Female Quixote* and *Shakespeare Illustrated*, for both of which Johnson wrote the dedication (B. 84 and 123). See quotation from Hawkins on B. 84.

23. 2. **Mrs. Sheridan**, wife of Thomas Sheridan, the actor, and mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the comedy writer (b. 1751). Johnson had mortally offended Thomas Sheridan by his remark on pensions (see on 24. 11), and Boswell laments the loss of Mrs. Sheridan's society : 'a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man.' He mentions her novel, *Miss Sydney Bidulph*, which Charles Fox called the best of modern novels (B. 120, 130). Her son used to declare that he had never read the book ; but he seems to have borrowed from it the incident in *The School for Scandal* of Sir Oliver's presenting himself to his relations in disguise (H. 1. 388 n).

23. 15. **Hector** in *Troilus and Cressida* (ii. 2) speaks thus :

'Paris and Troilus, you have both said well,
And on the cause and question now in hand
Have glozed, but superficially ; not much
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.'

Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 B.C., about 800 years after the supposed era of the Trojan war.

23. 16. **Julio Romano** (1492-1546), a celebrated painter and architect, was a disciple of Raphael; well known to all who have visited Mantua. In the *Winter's Tale* the statue of Hermione is said (v. 2) to have been 'performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom.' See also Act II. Sc. i., where Leontes says, 'I have dispatched in post To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple ...' Shakespeare's 'anachronisms' are of course very numerous. In *Coriolanus* he speaks of wearing spectacles, and in *Julius Caesar* of a clock striking, etc.

23. 26. **Whig.** See on 10. 10 and 10. 11. Under **Whiggism** in the *Dictionary* he quotes 'contumeliously' from Swift the expression, 'pamphlets wholly made up of whiggism and atheism.' Dr. Hill has pointed out that Johnson's definitions of Whig and Tory are partly taken from an English-Latin Dictionary by Littleton, published in 1703, where Whig is translated *Homo fanaticus, factiosus*, and Tory (*i.e.* bog-trotter, Irish robber) is given as *Praedo hibernicus*.

23. 26. **the excise.** See on 11. 11. His definition in the *Dictionary* is, 'A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.' Mr. Croker (says Dr. Hill), noticing the violence of Johnson's language against the Excise, with great acuteness suspected some cause of *personal* animosity. He succeeded in discovering among the records of the Excise Office a letter in which the Supervisor of Excise at Lichfield was empowered to proceed against Johnson's father for not paying excise duty on the parchment that he manufactured. In his *London* Johnson speaks of the 'blissful age . . . Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd, Or English honour grew a standing jest.'

23. 27. **Whig financiers.** 'Walpole's Excise Bill was the first measure in which an English Minister showed any real grasp of the principles of taxation. No tax had been more unpopular. Its origin was due to Pym and the Long Parliament; who imposed duties on beer, cider, and perry, which at the Restoration produced an annual income of more than £600,000. . . . So great had been the increase in the public wealth that the return from the Excise amounted at the death of George I. to nearly two millions and a half yearly.' Walpole's Excise Bill of 1733, which would have 'doubled English trade,' was withdrawn before an 'agitation of unprecedented violence' (Green).

23. 29. **thought of prosecuting.** See note on B. 99. Here again Mr. Croker's researches were successful. He obtained a copy of the 'case of Mr. Samuel Johnson for the opinion of Mr. Attorney General,' wherein Mr. Attorney General (William

Murray, afterwards the celebrated Lord Mansfield) is 'of opinion that it is a libel,' but thinks it better to give Mr. Samuel Johnson 'an opportunity of altering his definition, and, in case he do not, to threaten him with an information.' Johnson never altered his definition, except in his abridged edition.

23. 31. **Lord Privy Seal:** Earl Gower. Johnson's political animosity seems to have outweighed the gratitude which he owed Lord Gower for attempting to procure him an M.A. degree. See on 12. 17. 'You know, Sir,' said Johnson to Boswell, 'Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegade*, after telling that it meant *One who deserts to the enemy, a revoler*, I added, *Sometimes we say a GOWER*. Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out.' [In the *Dictionary* of 1786 it is *renegade*, and defined as (1) one that apostatises from the faith, (2) one who deserts to the enemy.]

23. 32. **A pension.** Macaulay, as often, quotes inaccurately. Johnson's definition was: 'An allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.' In his *London* (l. 51) he speaks with contempt of those 'whom pensions can incite to vote a patriot black, a courtier white' (*patriot* being the cant term for the discontented Whigs who, as the Tories, opposed Walpole). Boswell fiercely denounces those who 'maliciously represented the pension as a political bribe to Johnson to desert his avowed principles and become the tool of a Government which he held to be founded in usurpation.' In his interview with Lord Bute (says Dr. Burney) Johnson actually asked what he was expected to do for his pension (B. 125 *n*). According to Murphy (*Life*, p. 92), Johnson merely said that 'he thought himself the more highly honoured, as the favour was not bestowed on him for having dipped his pen in faction.' To which Lord Bute answered: 'No, Sir, it is not offered to you for having dipped your pen in faction, nor with a design that you ever should.' It would have been better if Johnson had followed this rule and had not given us 'Taxation no tyranny.'

23. 36. **time of wonders.** The contrast between Boswell's and Green's comments is amusing. 'The accession of George III.,' says Boswell, 'opened a new and brighter prospect... His present Majesty's education in this country, as well as his taste and beneficence,' etc., etc. Green says: 'He had a smaller mind than any English king before him save James the Second. He was wretchedly educated, and his natural taste was of the meanest sort. In ten years he had reduced the Government to a shadow and turned the loyalty of his subjects to disaffection. In twenty he had forced the colonies of America into revolt and

independence, and brought England to the brink of ruin.' Johnson was much impressed by his audience with George III. 'Sir, they may talk as they will, but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen.'

24. 4. The city ... Oxford. Oxford had been (see 10. 24), ever since the time of Charles I., the headquarters of the old loyalty, while the city of London had ever been the first to welcome a new order of things—commonwealths, restorations, declarations of rights, acts of settlement, etc. That Oxford was probably at this time, as Macaulay says, 'the most Jacobitical place in England' is evident from the general and public applause given to the treasonable speeches made there by Dr. King, the Principal of St. Mary's Hall. (See H. 1. 279*n*, and for treasonable verses found at Oxford see H. 1. 282*n*; and for King's assertion that Prince Charlie was in London in 1750 and 'came to my lodgings and drank tea with me,' see H. 5. 196*n*.) It was this Dr. King who brought Johnson from Oxford the diploma of his M.A. degree, and 'we may conceive,' says Boswell, 'what gratification this must have been to him, seeing that the principles of the great Dr. King were so congenial with his own.'

24. 5. Cavendishes: one of the chief Whig families. 'It rose from obscurity through the enormous grants of church-land made to Henry the Eighth's courtiers' (Green). It was a Cavendish—the Earl of Devonshire—who 'answered for the Whigs' in signing the invitation to William of Orange.

24. 5. Bentinck, a Dutchman, was made Duke of Portland by William. 'In accordance,' says the *Encycl. Brit.*, 'with the suggestion of the physicians,' he had volunteered to lie in bed with William of Orange when that prince had small-pox, and thus (as was believed) saved his life. He negotiated the marriage of William with Mary, and at the Revolution was 'the chief medium between William and the English nobility.' Later, he helped to draw up the conditions of the Peace of Ryswick. As he died in 1709, Macaulay must here mean his son.

24. 5. Somersets. The Duke of Somerset was one of the foremost Tory nobles. His predecessor, 'the proud Duke' (Macaulay's *Essays*, p. 741), had died in 1748. The family was founded by Lord Hertford, the great 'patron of Protestants,' whom Henry VIII. left by his will head of the Council of Regency. He assumed the extinct title of Duke of Somerset, and affected the supreme power as Protector, but had to give way to the Duke of Warwick.'

24. 6. Wyndhams. Sir W. Wyndham had married a daughter of the proud Duke of Somerset, and was a Tory leader. As Chancellor of the Exchequer under Queen Anne he had carried the Schism Act. He died in 1740.

24. 12. **graciously offered.** Murphy and (Thomas) Sheridan seem to have first broached the subject to a Lord Loughborough (Wedderburne, a Scotchman who had risen into favour), and he had brought it before Lord Bute, who advised the king. Johnson did not show himself remarkably grateful to Sheridan, for, when a few months later a pension of £200 was given to the old actor, the old bear growled out: 'What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.' By the way, at the same time as Johnson a certain Shebbeare (a wretched scribbler, says Macaulay in his *Essay on Chatham*, who had stood in the pillory for a libel on the Revolution), received a pension. 'I recollect,' says Boswell, 'a ludicrous paragraph in the newspapers, that the King had pensioned both a He-bear and a She-bear' (B. 569).

24. 12. **very little hesitation.** Murphy says: 'Lord Loughborough was well acquainted with Johnson, but having heard so much of his independent spirit, and of the downfall of Osborne the bookseller (see on 9. 21), he did not know but his benevolence might be rewarded with a folio at the head. He desired me to undertake the task. I went to Johnson's chambers in the Inner Temple, which, in fact, were the abode of wretchedness. By slow and studied approaches the message was disclosed. Johnson made a long pause; he asked if it was seriously intended. He fell into a profound meditation, and his own definition of a pensioner occurred to him. He desired to meet next day, and dine at the Mitre Tavern. At that meeting he gave up all his scruples.' Sheridan says that, when *he* brought the news, Johnson 'in a fervour of gratitude' exclaimed: 'The English language does not afford me terms adequate... I am *penetré* with his Majesty's goodness.'

24. 23. **promised edition of Shakspeare.** See on 21. 9. and 11. In the year 1763, says Boswell, a bookseller waited on him with a subscription for his *Shakspeare*, and wished to give him the name for insertion in the printed list of subscribers. 'I shall print no list,' said Johnson, abruptly; but added complacently, 'I have two very cogent reasons: I have lost all the names and have spent all the money' (B. 569). He also 'omitted' to give receipts for money received (B. 171).

25. 9. **about a ghost.** Doubtless Johnson (like many other highly intellectual persons) was 'weak enough to pay serious attention' to this story, and actually wrote a long account of it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which seems to prove that he did nourish some hope of a 'communication from the perturbed spirit'; which hope was frustrated, as he tells us that it was the opinion of the 'many gentlemen eminent for rank and character,' who had assembled to examine the phenomenon, that 'the child had some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise,' and

that there was 'no agency of any higher cause.' The chief impostor, says Dr. Hill (l. 406 *n*) was a man named Parsons, who set his daughter spirit-rapping in order to pay a grudge against a man who had sued him for debt. The 'ghost' was this man's sister-in-law, and accused him of having poisoned her. In 1778 Johnson 'expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cocklane Ghost, and related with much satisfaction how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers' (B. 458). Cocklane was to the east of Shoreditch. Boswell also refutes with vigour the accusation of 'absurd credulity' imputed to Johnson, and declares that Johnson thought 'the story had become so popular that it should be investigated.' In *Rasselas* he had already made Imlac say: 'That the dead are no more seen I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations.' Many years later, in speaking of the possible appearance of spirits after death, he said: 'All argument is against it; but all belief is for it'; and 'it is a question which, after five thousand years, is still undecided.' (See also *Essay*, p. 38.)

25. 16. Churchill in the year before (1761) had published his *Rosciad*, and woke up to find himself famous. The first three Cantos of the *Ghost* appeared at intervals in 1762, the fourth in 1763. Churchill began life as a curate on £40 a year. His satires brought him comparative wealth, and 'during the brief residue of his life he abandoned himself to literature and dissipation' (Ward). He died at Boulogne in 1764. The following are portions of the passages in which Johnson is attacked, and in which the 'terrible word' *cheating* occurs.

'Pomposo, insolent and loud,
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
Whose very name inspires an awe,
Whose every word is Sense and Law ...
Who, proudly seized of learning's throne,
Now damns all learning but his own;
Who scorns those common wares to trade in,
Reas'ning, convincing, and persuading,
But makes each sentence current pass
With 'puppy,' 'coxcomb,' 'scoundrel,' 'ass' ...
Who, to increase his native strength,
Draws words six syllables in length,
With which, assisted with a frown,
By way of club, he knocks us down.'¹

¹ Cf. what Goldsmith said of Johnson: 'When his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it.'

He for subscribers bates his hook,
 And takes their cash ; but where's the book ?
 No matter where ! Wise fear, we know,
 Forbids the robbing of a foe ;
 But what, to serve our private ends,
 Forbids the cheating of our friends ?'

25. 28. 'His Preface,' says Professor Dowden (*Introd. to Shaks.*, p. 97) is an admirable piece of criticism, robust and common sense, though not illuminated by imagination, or very profound in its philosophical views.' He defends Shakespeare from the absurd critics (such as Voltaire) who had censured him for mingling comic and tragic scenes—showing that in this the poet did in truth 'hold the mirror up to nature.' He makes very just and necessary remarks on the true meaning of the unities of time and place. On the other hand he is offended by Shakespeare's apparent 'sacrifice of virtue to convenience'—his grossness—his not infrequent timidity, and the tediousness of many of his 'set speeches.' A quibble, Johnson justly says, 'is the golden apple for which Shakespeare will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation.'

25. 33. Polonius... Here again Macaulay is surely dabbling on the colour to get a little vivid contrast. It seems to me perfectly impossible that he can have seriously preferred Johnson's analysis of the character of Polonius, which, though it 'elucidates the meaning of Shakespeare and exhibits the mind of his critic'—as Professor Dowden well says—contains but little original thought, to Goethe's celebrated analysis of Hamlet's character. In a more natural frame of mind, Macaulay wrote, 'such books as Lessing's *Laocöon*, such passages as the criticism on Hamlet in *Wilhelm Meister*, fill me with wonder and despair' (Macaulay to Napier, June, 1838. *Life*, p. 343). These criticisms are too long to quote *in extenso*. Johnson's main drift is contained in the words, 'This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius'; and Goethe's analysis of Hamlet's character is perhaps best intimated by his parable of an 'oak-tree planted in some costly and delicate vase, where only flowers should have grown; the roots spread, and the vase is shattered.'

25. 36. a more worthless edition... Such is not the opinion of saner critics than Macaulay. 'Johnson's preface and notes are distinguished by clearness of thought and diction, and by masterly common sense' (*Cambridge Shakespeare*, l. xxxvi.). Adam Smith, at the time of its publication, called it 'the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.' Boswell praises loudly Johnson's critical judgment and courage in displaying not only the excellencies but also the 'defects of that immortal bard,' a 'blind indiscriminate admiration of

whom had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners.' (Voltaire is, of course, specially aimed at. By the way, it is a general belief among literary Germans, and one not confirmed by Boswell's words, that Shakespeare was discovered by German criticism. Very many half-educated Germans who know their Shakespeare far better than many English who would be indignant at being called half-educated believe Shakespeare to have been a German. A German professor once told me that 'Shakespeare tried to say in English what he would have succeeded in expressing if he had been a German.')

26. 2. **conjectural emendation.** 'As a conjectural emender he was not happy. He tells us that, as he practised conjecture more he learned to trust it less, and after he had printed a few plays resolved to insert none of his own readings in the text' (*Dowden*). Perhaps he had in mind the extraordinary and ridiculous conjectures of the great scholar, Bentley, in his edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

26. 10. **altogether neglected.** In his 'Proposals' (see on 21. 9.) he expresses the hope that 'by comparing the works of Shakespeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities,' etc. The fact is that from the quotations in his *Dictionary* one might infer that he had never heard of Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, or the others whom Macaulay mentions. Nor does he seem to have once mentioned any of them in all the conversations related by Boswell. Beaumont and Fletcher are twice mentioned by Boswell himself, and on one of these occasions (B. 297) Johnson evidently ignored the remark—having no information to give—and harked back to Gray's Odes. Chaucer is only once mentioned by Johnson in Boswell's book, and that as an imitator from the Italian (B. 453). Spenser (and Dante) he names once, in connexion with Bunyan. Ben Jonson is once mentioned, and that by Boswell (T. 310). Bacon 'he had never read till he was compiling his *Dictionary*' (B. 429). In the Preface to the *Dictionary* he says that 'a speech adequate to all purposes of use and elegance' could be formed from the Elizabethan writers; and these writers he specifies, viz., Hooker, Bacon, Raleigh, Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare.

26. 28. **His detractors.** His *Shakespeare* was 'virulently attacked' by Dr. William Kenrick, a Scotch LL.D. (B. 171). Kenrick 'wrote for booksellers in a great variety of branches.' He translated Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and *Emile*. At a later period he attacked Goldsmith and Garrick, and was sued by Garrick for libel. He made another attack on Johnson in 1768 (B. 194), and also threatened to publish a list of 'several thousand etymological, orthographical, and lexicographical blun-

ders' in Johnson's *Dictionary*—a threat that he does not seem to have carried out.

26. 30. **had little to say.** Even Boswell's praise is tempered with the remark that 'his researches were not so ample, and his investigations so acute, as they might have been' (B. 171).

26. 33. **lain heavy.** Dr. Hill well cites the similar case of the poet Cowper when engaged on his edition of *Milton*. 'I might as well be haunted by his ghost,' wrote Cowper, 'as goaded with such continual reproaches for neglecting him.' Hawkins says that Reynolds and other of Johnson's friends used to try to urge him on by 'entangling him by a wager.'

27. 1. **Doctor's degree.** In 1755 he had received his M.A. diploma from Oxford; in 1765 he received the degree of LL.D. from Trinity College, Dublin; in 1767 he had his interview with the king, and in 1768 he was appointed first Professor in Ancient Literature to the newly instituted Royal Academy of Arts, of which Reynolds was the first President and Oliver Goldsmith the first Professor of Ancient History. (Goldsmith was succeeded by Gibbon; and Boswell became Secretary for foreign correspondence, on the strength of his supposed intimacy with foreign languages.) It was not until 1775 that Oxford gave Johnson the degree of Doctor in Jure Civili (D.C.L., not LL.D., as Dr. Hill gives it), so that Macaulay seems to have confused the Dublin and the Oxford degrees.

27. 3. **expressed a hope.** 'His Majesty inquired if he was then writing anything. He answered he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew ... he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said the king, "if you had not written so well."' A long account of this interview in the library in Buckingham Palace is given by Boswell (B. 184-187). The many questions on literary subjects asked by the king, and the knowledge and interest that he displayed in such matters seem really to scarcely corroborate Green's very low estimate of his mind and education (see on 23. 36). It is noticeable (but seemingly not noticed even by Dr. Hill) that the king 'expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it,' thus foreshadowing Johnson's biographies of the English Poets. In 1780 (thirteen years later) Johnson seems to have had another interview with George III. At least Hannah More records in that year: 'Johnson told me he had been with the king that morning, who enjoined him to add Spenser to his *Lives of the Poets*.'

27. 5. **political tracts:** i.e. *The False Alarm* (1770), written in the same year and on the same subject as Burke's far more

famous *Thoughts on the present Discontent*, i.e. the alarm caused by the unconstitutional action of Parliament in not allowing the election of Wilkes (see B. 212); *Falkland's Islands* (1771), against war with Spain, which claimed these islands (B. 219); *The Patriot* (1774), a pamphlet addressed to electors (B. 279). They were all probably written at the request of the Ministry, and (as Boswell says of the first) 'from materials furnished by the Ministry.' Besides these tracts he wrote (1768) the Prologue to Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man*, and revised and re-edited his *Dictionary* (1773).

27. 6. **forty-eight hours.** *The False Alarm* was actually written 'between 8 o'clock of one night and 12 o'clock of the next,' and *The Patriot* in a single day (H. 1. 373 n).

27. 19. **pompous triads.** I do not feel quite sure what Macaulay here means by 'triads.' In Johnson's (original) *Dictionary* no explanation is given except 'three united,' and no quotation. Neither Pythagorean, chemical, musical, nor Hindu triads will suit the context. So I am reduced to 'a form of composition which,' according to the *Imperial Dictionary*, 'came into use in the 12th century in Welsh literature,' or 'the Triads, which are enumerations of events or other particulars, bound together in knots of three.' A quotation is given from Craik: 'Of the Triads some are moral and others historical.' In Johnson's writings one now and then comes across such 'triads' as the following: 'she had been attended by the great, the sprightly, and the vain, and had seen her regard solicited by the obsequiousness of gallantry, the gaiety of wit, and the timidity of love' (*Rambler* 119), and 'every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross' (*Life of Dryden*).

27. 33. **fold his legs ...** This he said when speaking of John Wesley: 'His conversation is good, but he is never at leisure ... This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do' (B. 443). He sometimes spoke a little disdainfully of 'talk' as distinguished from 'conversation' (on which topic many of his definitions, maxims, and habits are related by Boswell), but in reality he did not despise what he called a 'good talk.'

28. 4. **send him back ...** But, as Macaulay has just hinted, he 'seldom started a subject himself' (Malone). 'He was,' says Frances Burney, 'never at his best when there was nobody to draw him out.' 'Tom Tyers,' said Johnson himself, 'described me the best. Sir (said he), *you are like a ghost: you never speak till you are spoken to.*' When the subject started was one on which he felt conscious of his ignorance, he would ignore it, or (as Goldsmith said, adapting a phrase from Cibber) finding his

pistol miss fire, he would knock one down with the butt end. 'My dear Boswell,' he exclaimed, on some such occasion, 'let's have no more of this; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune.' He seems to have often 'plunged' for one side or the other of a question from mere 'pleasure in contradiction,' as Boswell calls it. 'Look at him now!' exclaimed Garrick once, 'he is thinking which side he shall take.' His object was pretty much that of the old Athenian sophists—to talk for 'victory'; and very often it involved 'making the worse argument appear the better,' as Plato expresses it. He held that there could be 'no animated conversation without a contest for superiority' (B. 338), and he had, as his friend Gerard Hamilton said, 'a talent for splendid perversion of truth.' Boswell has given a sprightly definition of what Johnson meant by a 'good talk.' Calling on him in the morning he found Johnson highly satisfied with his colloquial prowess on the preceding evening. 'Well,' exclaimed Johnson, 'we had a good talk.' 'Yes, Sir,' replied Boswell; 'you tossed and gored several persons' (B. 195). According to Walter Scott, the only interview that Johnson and Adam Smith (two great 'philosophers') had, seems to have ended like the scene between *Monsieur le philosophe* and the dancing master in Molière's play. 'You lie,' said Johnson. 'You are the son of a—,' retorted Adam Smith.

28. 5. a club: 'that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club' (Macaulay, *Life of Goldsmith*). Boswell says that it 'existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of the Literary Club. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it... The original members were Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Nugent, Beauclerk, Langton, Goldsmith, Chamier, and Hawkins (who was obliged to withdraw, having been rude to Burke). They met at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho' (B. 164). Boswell gives a list of subsequent members (up to 1792) of whom the best known are perhaps Garrick, Boswell himself (1773), Adam Smith, Gibbon, Sir. W. Jones, Sheridan, Joseph Banks, Malone, Steevens, Dr. Burney, and Dr. Percy. In 1798 the numbers were fixed at forty. Since Boswell's time the club has had as members many leading politicians, such as Canning, Sir John Russell, Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, Balfour, and many literary men, such as Scott, Macaulay, Tennyson, etc.

28. 13. *Goldsmith*. Though one of the club's most distinguished members—in one respect far greater than Johnson—poor Goldsmith did not shine in conversation. His sensitive and somewhat jealous, though loveable, nature was sometimes deeply

wounded—and no wonder—not only by ridicule, such as that displayed by Garrick's well-known imaginary epitaph on him :

'Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll,'

but also by Johnson's sledgehammer eloquence and overbearing manner—a manner that probably excited imitation among smaller men, such as Boswell, who could not appreciate Goldsmith's real greatness as Johnson did. The scene at the dinner-table of Mr. Dilly—how Goldsmith was interrupted by Johnson in one of his attempts at conversation and flew into a passion and was called 'impertinent,' and how Johnson afterwards, at the club, asked for pardon and obtained it—is worth reading (B. 267-8). Now and then Goldsmith turned the tables on Johnson. Once, when he began to talk about the difficulty of writing fables, he saw Johnson shaking with laughter, 'Upon which he smartly proceeded: *Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if YOU were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES.*'

28. 14. **Sir Joshua Reynolds**, besides being a great portrait painter, has some claim to literary fame. As Mr. Stopford Brooke says, he 'first made English art literary' in his celebrated *Discourses on Painting*. He seems to have had a very amiable character, and to have often thrown oil on the troubled waters at the Club. With quiet firmness he would hold his own even against the bluster of Johnson, and on one occasion Johnson, who had felt compelled to apologise for a brutally rude remark, is reported to have actually *blushed*—at least Boswell 'really thought' that he noticed a blush. Goldsmith well describes Reynolds' character in *Retaliation*.

28. 16. **Sir William Jones** was a great Oriental scholar; the first who attracted notice to Sanscrit. He is said to have known 28 languages more or less perfectly. Johnson and Boswell, when in Scotland together, amused themselves by stocking the Chairs of an imaginary College with the Club members (see T. 72). Sir W. Jones was to have the chair of 'Oriental learning'; Goldsmith that of poetry and ancient history; and 'I'll trust *theology* to nobody but myself,' said Johnson, but ultimately contented himself with logic and metaphysics, yielding theology to Dr. Percy (the collector of the *Reliques*, at this time Dean of Carlisle, afterwards Bishop of Dromore).

28. 16. **Garrick**. See on 7. 12 and 16. 5. Boswell also describes his mimicry of Johnson's Lichfield pronunciation. 'Garrick used sometimes to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch bowl, with uncouth gesticulations looking round the company and calling out—"Who's for *poonsh*?"' As regards literature—Garrick certainly helped towards a more general

knowledge of Shakespeare. He gave, on an average, eighteen representations of Shakespeare's plays annually. Johnson, however, did not set much value on what Garrick had done for Shakespeare, and did not mention him at all in the Preface to his edition (see T. 181, with Boswell's footnote). 'Garrick,' says Mr. Stopford Brooke, 'began the restoration of the genuine text of Shakespeare's plays for the stage.' But, on the other hand, he inserted additions of his own manufacture—such as 'a most affecting scene' (says Murphy) appended to *Romeo and Juliet* and a totally new fifth act to *Hamlet*. 'Now I have quitted the theatre, I will sit down and read Shakespeare,' said Garrick. 'Tis time you should,' answered Johnson. But Johnson really had affection and admiration for Garrick, though Garrick was never quite at his ease with his old tutor. The monkey and the bear, as has been said, are not apt to become intimate.

28. 22. **Bennet Langton** was much loved and respected by Johnson. Boswell (B. 81) tells us that he came from Langton in Lincolnshire. (The family had a long pedigree—'twelve to fifteen feet of parchment' in length—which included the name of Cardinal Langton, in King John's reign.) He came as a young man to London 'chiefly with the view of being introduced to the author of the *Rambler*'—by whose huge uncouth figure and habits he seems to have been much taken aback, having expected a 'decent, well-drest, and remarkably decorous philosopher.' He afterwards went to Trinity College, Oxford, where Johnson passed some time in his company, and was introduced by him to Topham Beauclerk. Langton was one of the original members of the Club (being a fine Greek scholar), and succeeded Johnson as professor of Ancient Literature to the Royal Academy.

28. 24. **Topham Beauclerk** was grandson of the first Duke of St. Albans, and thus illegitimately descended from Charles II., whom he is said to have somewhat resembled in feature—a fact that strongly commended him to Johnson, who also had an admiration for his polished and vigorous language and aristocratic air. 'What a coalition!' exclaimed Garrick when he heard of the pair foregathering. Topham inherited a good deal of the Nell Gwynn character. He married Lady Diana Spencer (grand-daughter of Marlborough) who had been divorced on his account from Lord Bolingbroke. 'Lady Di,' as she was familiarly called, was a talented artist (latter-day journalism, I see, dubs her with the title 'immortal'). At first Johnson spoke of her in very plain language indeed: 'My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a —, and there's an end of it.' But later both he and (what is less wonderful) Boswell were on terms of great intimacy with 'Lady Di' (B. 281, 295, etc.). She seems, by Frances Burney's

account, to have been very brutally treated by Topham, and to have been intensely relieved by his death. Johnson's affection, on the other hand, for his friend was so great that when Beauclerk was dying 'he said, with a voice faltering with emotion, that he would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save him.' Beauclerk (as his great-grandfather, Charles II.) illustrated Johnson's pet theory of 'good principles with loose practice.' Johnson told him (and said that Alexander the Great could not have desired a greater compliment) that his 'body was all vice and his mind all virtue.'

28. 28. Of **Burke** Johnson said on various occasions: 'he is a fellow who calls out all my powers'; 'he has an affluence of conversation'; 'he is ready to meet one on every topic'... 'not from a desire of distinction but from mere ebullition of mind'; 'he is never what we call humdrum, never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off.' And when Boswell added: 'yet he can listen,' Johnson replied, 'No; I cannot say that he is good at that.' When Burke was first elected member of Parliament (1766), Sir John Hawkins expressed surprise. Thereupon Johnson said: 'We who know Mr. Burke know that he will be one of the first men in this country.' A very short time afterwards Burke 'darted into fame' with his two speeches against the Stamp-act, of which Macaulay wrote: 'The house of Commons heard Pitt for the last time and Burke for the first time, and was in doubt to which of them the palm of eloquence should be assigned.' The speeches, said Johnson, 'were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder' (B. 177).

28. 31. the second part. 'As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr. Langton recollects having passed an evening with Johnson and Mr. Burke, when Mr. Burke repeatedly entered upon topics which it was evident he would have illustrated with extensive knowledge and richness of expression; but Johnson always seized upon the conversation. As Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were walking home, Mr. Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night; Mr. Langton joined in this, but added, he could have wished to hear more from another person (plainly intimating that he meant Mr. Burke). "O, no (said Mr. Burke) it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him"' (B. 536).

29. 2. not without difficulty. Boswell relates (B. 261) how he 'sat in a state of anxiety, which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate,' awaiting the result of the ballot (in which a single black ball was fatal); and how Johnson proposed him, and also introduced him with a

humorous charge on the subject of the conduct expected of him. When in Scotland, Johnson told Boswell that several members had wished to keep him out, and that Burke had doubted if he were fit for the club; but 'now you are in, none of them are sorry' (T. 48). Boswell evidently regarded himself as a kind of link between the Club and foreign nations (in 1769 he was actually installed as 'Secretary for Foreign Correspondence' of the Royal Academy). He seems to have possessed a certain fluency in French, and knew a little Italian and perhaps a little Dutch. But he had, as he himself says, 'a kind of impotency of study.' Even in his special subject, law—the subject which he was to 'profess' in the imaginary Club-College—he owned that it cost him more trouble to hide his ignorance than to show his knowledge, as his father had foretold. To judge from the specimens that he gives us of his French (as also of Latin), he had no very thorough knowledge of the language; and as regards Italian, he may have been able to chatter a little, but he quotes three lines from 'an Italian writer with the epithet *divini poetæ*,' as if he had never heard of Dante (B. 443 n).

29. 3. **James Boswell.** For a sketch of Boswell's life perhaps I may refer to my edition of his *Tour to the Hebrides*, published in this Series. Of his character and his value as a writer there are very many and very different estimates, to which it would be superfluous to add another here. The only way to arrive at an opinion of any real worth on the subject is to read his writings and form an opinion for oneself. The opinions of others may then be of some use. Starting, for instance, from Macaulay's assertion that '*because* Boswell was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, his quick observation and retentive memory have made him immortal,' or that 'if he had not been a great fool he would never have been a great writer,' the student will do well to consider for himself not only whether such result would in any case be possible, but also whether the assumption that Boswell was a 'great writer' may not be quite as questionable as the assumption that he was a 'great fool'—even though it may be admitted that he is likely to prove 'immortal' in so far as to always find readers and admirers of a certain sort 'as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language.' See Macaulay's *Essay on Boswell's Johnson*; Carlyle's *Hero as a Man of Letters and Miscellanies*; the introduction to the Globe Edition of *Boswell's Johnson* by Mr. Morris; Dr. Hill's *Dr. Johnson, his Friends and his Critics*; Sir Leslie Stephen's *Samuel Johnson*, pp. 83-94.

29. 17. **patriot**: the cant term for an opponent of Walpole's policy, especially a disaffected Whig. See on 11. 14. By *fiercest patriot* possibly Macaulay means a Wilkite fiercer than Wilkes himself; for it was reported that, in an interview with the

King, Wilkes disclaimed one of his most ardent followers with these words: 'In fact, Sir, he was a Wilkite, which I never was.' The King is said to have been much taken with the 'good breeding' of the notorious 'rebel'; and nothing in Boswell's book is more amusing than the description of the ruse by which he effected a meeting between Johnson and 'Jack Wilkes,' and how Johnson at once succumbed to the charms of Wilkes' society (B. 377). The 'outrageous usurpation' (as Green well calls it) of Parliament in the case of the Middlesex election (see note on Johnson's *False Alarm*) brought matters to a crisis in 1769-70. The *Bill of Rights* (passed in 1689) had abolished in England all claim of 'hereditary right to the throne independent of the law.' William and Mary and Anne 'were sovereigns simply by virtue of the Bill of Rights, as George I. and his successors by virtue of the Act of Settlement.' In the first ten years of his reign (1760-70) George III. had (as Green says) reduced government to a shadow, and against the usurpations of a Parliament that was merely a tool of the king a *Society for Supporting the Bill of Rights* found great popularity.

29. 18. **Whitefield.** See Green's description of George Whitefield and John Wesley in his section on the Religious Revival (*Short History*, pp. 718-20).

29. 29. **with a baby.** Macaulay quotes, as often, inaccurately. The passage deserves transcription. 'I know not how so whimsical a thought came into my mind, but I asked: If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a new-born child with you, what would you do? *Johnson.* Why, Sir, I should not much like my company. *Boswell.* But would you take the trouble of rearing it?' Johnson here seemed unwilling to pursue the subject, but on being pressed he answered: 'Why yes, Sir, I would. But I must have all conveniences. If I had no garden, I would make a shed on the roof, and take it there for fresh air. I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water, to please it, not with cold water to give it pain.' Boswell suggests that warm water is relaxing; whereupon Johnson continues: 'Sir, you are not to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating children does no good,' and so on (B. 207). On many occasions Boswell with delightful naïveté records Johnson's irritation at being pestered with questions—though now and then he is modest enough to suppress the fact that he was the questioner. 'Being irritated by hearing a gentleman (evidently B. himself) ask Mr. Levett a variety of questions concerning him when he was sitting by, he broke out: "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both"' (B. 373). On another occasion, when 'a gentleman' (B. himself, doubtless) 'teased him with questions,' he 'at last grew enraged and said, "I will not be put to the

question. Don't you consider, Sir, that these are not the manners of a gentleman? I will not be baited with *what* and *why*: what is this? what is that? why is a cow's tail long? why is a fox's tail bushy?" The 'gentleman,' says Boswell, 'was a good deal out of countenance' (B. 458). *No words*

29. 29. **water-drinker.** Dr. Hill gives a long account of the various phases of abstinence from wine that Johnson passed through. For considerable periods (1736-57 and 1765-84) it seems to have been practically total abstinence. Johnson's own account in April, 1778, was 'Early in life I drank wine; for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a great deal. I then had a severe illness and left it off, and I have never begun it again.' See also T. 156. Johnson was, as he himself says, 'a hardened and shameless tea-drinker.' Notices of this habit in Boswell's book are numerous. A dozen cups seems to have been his 'round number' (H. 1. 313 *n*), but at Dunvegan Castle (T. 152 *note*) Lady Macleod is said to have offered to supply him with a small basin, after having poured out his sixteenth cup. Johnson did not smoke (nor, I think, did Boswell), but he seems to have approved of the habit in others.

29. 31. **habitual sot.** Even such an admirer as Dr. Hill has to sadly admit that 'Boswell shortened his life by drinking, if indeed he did not die of it.' The data that could be adduced in confirmation of Macaulay's strong words are legion; but the sooner they are forgotten, the better. Let us give Boswell at least the credit of having made many earnest though vain resolves to break himself of the fatal habit. For short periods he seems actually to have followed Johnson's monitions and to have been a water-drinker.

29. 36. **twenty years: i.e. 1763 to 1784.** Boswell, after a certain amount of education in Edinburgh, was sent in 1759 to Glasgow to study Moral Philosophy under Adam Smith—a step which resulted in his eloping with an actress. His father (Lord Auchinleck) tracked the fugitives to London, and succeeded in parting them by holding out the prospect of a military career, for which he knew Jamie to have a hankering. But the prospect proved delusive, and Jamie, left to his own devices in London, employed himself in sowing wild oats and contracting a susceptibility for the charms of London dissipation which proved incurable. This is what Boswell euphemistically terms 'my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760' (B. 129). He was at this time a youth of twenty years. After a vain attempt to enter the Inner Temple, he returned to Edinburgh, where he spent about two years, apparently in anything but a profitable fashion. In the autumn of 1762 he found his way back to London, and it was in May of the next year that the bookseller

Davies introduced him to Johnson. (For a description of this introduction see B. 131 and T. ix.)

30. 9. **fill quarto note-books.** Although he sometimes (as he admits) only remembered the general drift of the conversation, and could not reproduce it with verbal accuracy, there can be no doubt (for many testified to the fact, and Johnson himself gave his *imprimatur* to most of the *Tour to the Hebrides*) that Boswell did manage to jot down a great deal of what was actually said. 'O for a shorthand to take this down!' he once exclaimed. 'You'll carry it all in your head,' replied Mrs. Thrale; 'a long head is as good as a short hand' (B. 590). Boswell had before this (viz. 1778) devised a 'method of my own of writing half words, and leaving some out altogether so as yet to keep the substance and language of any discourse so much in view that I could give it very completely soon after I had taken it down.' Johnson challenged him to a test, and Boswell seems to have broken down under it—a fact that he confesses with his usual artlessness (B. 459).

30. 16. **Henry Thrale.** His father, nephew to a former proprietor, Halsey, had (according to Johnson) 'worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery.' At Halsey's death, as he only left a daughter who married Lord Cobham, this nephew bought up the brewery on easy terms (for £30,000), and made such a good thing of it that he could afford his son, Henry Thrale (Johnson's friend), an allowance of £1000 a year as soon as he had left Oxford. Henry Thrale's profits as brewer were about £10,000 a year (he paid £20,000 yearly in excise), and at his death the brewery was sold to Barclay & Perkins for £135,000. (See B. 169, 559, and Index.) It will be noticed that Macaulay's description of the Thrales is taken to some extent verbally from Boswell.

Mrs. Thrale was originally a 'Miss Hesther Lynch Salusbury, of good Welsh extraction' (B. 170). She was born in 1741. Boswell describes her as 'short, plump, and brisk,' while Mr. Thrale was 'tall and stately.' For her marriage with Signor Piozzi, see 40. 15. The Thrales were married in 1763, and Johnson made their acquaintance, according to Mrs. Thrale (*Anecdotes*, 125), in 1764, and according to Boswell (B. 169) and Johnson himself (*Prayers and Med.*, 191) in 1765. This is of no real importance, but it is necessary to note it, as Macaulay lashes Croker for stating that the date was 1765 (*Essay*, p. 8). Dr. Hill gives us a whole Appendix on the subject. He reminds us that Cowper was introduced to the Unwins in 1765. Mrs. Thrale (as Madame Piozzi) published *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the last twenty years of his life* (1786), and also *Letters to and from Dr. Johnson*.

30. 26. **preferred their house to any other ...** The fact is that

Johnson had little or no opportunity of preferring any other such house. Lord Chesterfield, for one, had not encouraged his advances. Johnson was now 'in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends.' At the Thrales he began first to 'mix with polite society ... He saw a constant succession of well-accomplished visitors, and began to wear off the rugged points of his character' (Boswell: *Letter to Temple*).

31. 3. Southwark. Henry Thrale was M.P. for Southwark, as also his father had been (B. 169). Johnson wrote for him addresses to the electors at the election of 1780; but Mr. Thrale was defeated (B. 525, 6). See also B. 279*n*, where Boswell speaks of Mr. Thrale's house in Southwark; afterwards the residence of Mr. Perkins, one of the new proprietors of the brewery.

31. 9. Abyssinian tale: *Rasselas*, ch. 46.

31. 14. body and mind. Probably in 1766 or at the end of 1765 (the exact period is not easy to discover) Johnson had a long and severe illness, which seems to have been to a great extent a mental distemper. Boswell does not seem to have known of it. (About this time Johnson did not write to Boswell for about two years.) In the *Piozzi Letters*, however, we have a graphic account, from which it is evident that Johnson was in a very bad state—confined for weeks, or perhaps months, to his rooms (he lodged at this time at Johnson's Court, No. 7)—and suffering terribly from the dread of insanity. The Thrales persuaded him to remove to Streatham, where (says Mrs. Thrale) 'I undertook the care of his health, and had the honour and happiness of contributing to its restoration.'

31. 22. Buck and Maccaroni. See T. 53, 131, 151. There was a 'Maccaroni Club,' which, as Horace Walpole tells us, was 'composed of all the travelled young men who wear long curls and spying-glasses.' The word, according to Skeat, comes from the old Italian *maccare*, to bruise, batter; whence the dish *maccaroni* (*prov.* for Ital. *maccheroni*), a mixture of flour, butter, cheese, etc. Hence also *maccaronic verses*, i.e. those in which there is a jumble of languages (see B. 464). Possibly *maccarone* with the meaning 'buffoon' or 'dandy' may be connected with these absurd maccaronic verses; but more probably it is analogous to the German 'Hans Wurst,' which we had in England as 'Jack Pudding' (cf. French 'Jean Pottage'), and which means a buffoon. See *Spectator*, 47. The inventor of 'Maccaronic poetry' was Merlin Coccaie, also known as Theophilo Folengo, who in 1509 became a Benedictine monk, but left the order, and roamed about Italy in company with a lady of noble birth, and took to writing this queer kind of verse, mostly satire against the Church and the vanities of the world, in his native Mantuan dialect 'whimsically twisted into burlesque Latin' (Morley).

31. 25. Bath ... Brighton ... Wales ... Paris. See B. 369, 389, 435, 580. He was in Wales with the Thrales in 1774, the year after his visit to the Hebrides (B. 278), and in the next year he accompanied them to Paris (B. 315). The year after Mr. Thrale's death Johnson was with Mrs. Thrale and Frances Burney at Brighton (1782), where he had been with the Thrale family several times previously. See on 39. 32.

31. 28. gloomy courts. See on 31. 14. Dr. Hill (H. 3. 405 *n*) has tracked Johnson from lodging to lodging. After receiving the pension he seems to have moved into what Boswell calls 'a good house in Johnson's Court, Fleet Street' (B. 173). Miss Williams had a room on the ground floor, and Dr. Levett a garret, while Johnson's study (says Sir J. Hawkins) was a well-lighted upper room 'with furniture that would not have disgraced a better dwelling.' In 1775 or early in 1776 he removed to No. 8 Bolt-Court, 'still keeping to his favourite Fleet Street.' (This house was burnt down in 1819.) 'Behind the house was a garden, which he took delight in watering' (*Hawkins*). He told Mrs. Thrale that he even had a vine in his garden with three bunches of grapes on it. In this house he remained till his death (1784).

31. 30. books falling to pieces ... 'Mr. Levett this day (July 18, 1763) showed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his chambers ... I found a number of good books, but very dusty, and in great confusion. The floor was strewn with manuscript leaves ... I observed an apparatus for chymical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond' (B. 148). In a letter Boswell describes this garret as 'up four pair of stairs, very airy, and commanding a view of St. Paul's.'

31. 32, veal pie... Macaulay copies this from Boswell. 'April 11, being Easter Sunday (1773), after having attended Divine Service at St. Paul's, I repaired to Dr. Johnson. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, while he lived in the wilds of Neufchatel (see T. p. x.); I had as great a curiosity to dine with Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet Street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-drest dish, but I found everything in very good order... As dinner here was considered as a singular phenomenon... my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote (the comedian), I remember, in allusion to Francis, the negro, was willing to suppose that our repast was *black broth*. But the fact was that we had'—Macaulay's *menu* plus 'very good soup.' Speaking of a later time (at Bolt-Court), Hawkins says that Johnson 'sometimes gave not inelegant dinners' to his most intimate friends.

31. 34. **It was the home...** Sir Leslie Stephen has given a graphic picture of this collection of 'waifs and strays' (*Samuel Johnson*, 145-50), to which may be added one from whom Boswell says he 'suffered a good deal'—Johnson's favourite cat, Hodge. For these various persons see Index of Globe Edition.

32. 1. **Miss Anna Williams** had been a friend of Tetty's. She was the daughter of a Welsh doctor, and came to London and to Johnson's house in order to undergo an operation for cataract, which proved unsuccessful; and she was then (about 1752) allowed to take up her permanent residence with him, contributing probably something for household purposes. She was a woman of 'some sense and cultivation,' and was much respected by Johnson, and much missed by him when she died in 1783, although he sometimes complained of her jealousy and peevishness.

32. 4. **Mrs. Desmoulins** was the daughter of Dr. Swinfen, of Lichfield, Johnson's godfather, and widow of a writing-master. Johnson allowed her half-a-guinea a week, 'above a twelfth part of his pension,' as Boswell remarks. She and her daughter did not join the 'strange menagerie' till about 1778 (B. 440).

32. 8. **Miss Carmichael** is mentioned by Boswell in 1778. 'On March 20 I found him at his own house (Bolt-Court), and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose, Mrs. Desmoulins, and I think her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael being all lodged in it' (B. 440).

32. 9. **Robert Levett**, according to Malone (B. 80), had at one time been a waiter in a coffee-house in Paris much frequented by surgeons. They made up a purse to enable him to attend medical lectures. 'It appears from Johnson's diary that their acquaintance commenced about 1746... I have heard him say that he should not be satisfied, though attended by all the College of Physicians, unless he had Mr. Levett with him... Mr. Levett had an apartment in Johnson's house and waited upon him every morning, through the whole course of his late and tedious breakfast. He was of a strange, grotesque, appearance, stiff and formal in his manner, and seldom said a word while any company was present.' He seems to have been called 'Dr. Levett' by Francis, the negro servant. In 1762 (being then over sixty years) he married a woman of very questionable character, who soon deserted him. He then returned to Johnson, and died in 1782. Johnson wrote some verses on his death, which have been much admired by such good judges as Thackeray and Sir Leslie Stephen. See B. 580.

Of this 'happy family,' Dr. Johnson, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, gives an amusing account: 'Williams,' he says, 'hates every body; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll loves none of them.'

32. 14. **Frank**, or Francis, Barber, was a native of Jamaica. He was brought to England in 1750 by Colonel Bathurst, father of Johnson's 'beloved friend,' Dr. Bathurst (B. 62, 78). The Colonel left the negro his liberty by will, and Dr. Bathurst (who, failing to obtain practice at home went to Havannah, and died there in 1762) allowed him to enter Johnson's service. Johnson seems to have sent him to school for some time. On two occasions he left Johnson for a short time—once taking a fancy to go to sea—but with these exceptions he served him for over 30 years continuously (1752-84). Johnson was very fond of Francis, and took a deep interest in his religious education. He left him an annuity of £70 (B. 683).

32. 31. **an account of the Hebrides.** Boswell's *Tour* begins thus: 'Dr. Johnson had for many years given me hopes that we should go together, and visit the Hebrides. Martin's account of these islands had impressed us with a notion that we might there contemplate a system of life almost totally different from what we had been accustomed to see, and to find simplicity and wildness, and all the circumstances of remote time or place, so near our native great island was an object within the reach of reasonable curiosity. Dr. Johnson has said in his *Journey* that he scarcely remembered how the wish to visit the Hebrides was excited; but he told me, in summer 1763, that his father put Martin's account into his hands when he was very young...' Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* was published in 1703. In the 'Advocates' Library' in Edinburgh a copy has been found in which Boswell has written: 'This very book accompanied Mr. Samuel Johnson and me in our *Tour* to the Hebrides' (H. 5. 13 n). Ten years later Johnson said of his Hebridean tour: 'I got an acquisition of more ideas by it than by anything else that I remember. I saw quite a different system of life' (B. 602).

33. 8. **After wandering...** In my edition of the *Tour* (in this Series) will be found a map of the route (see also B. 272). Johnson crossed the Highland line and plunged into the Celtic region when he left Inverness, which he reached (Aug. 28th) from Edinburgh by way of the East Coast. On the 30th they began their 'equitation,' as Boswell calls it (T. 89, and for Dr. Johnson on shaggy ponies and 'shelties,' see pp. 100, 214, etc.). They crossed to Skye on 2nd September, and landed at Oban on the 22nd October, spending thus seven weeks in the Islands. Their wanderings through the 'Celtic region' (say from Inverness to Dumbarton) extended from 30th August to 28th October.

33. 14. **Journey to the Hebrides.** The title is really *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (B. 284, 291, 309, 405, 472, etc.). I find, however, that both Johnson and Boswell name it as Macaulay does (and as also Sir Leslie Stephen does). See

B. 280, 281, and 482. Also MacNicol's attack was called *Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides* (B. 287). This trivial inconsistency seems to have escaped even the eagle eye of Dr. Hill.

33. 27. **Presbyterian ... ritual.** When in Edinburgh he refused to go and hear Principal Robertson preach, though he was on friendly terms with him. 'I will hear him,' he said, 'if he will get up into a tree and preach, but I will not give a sanction by my presence to a Presbyterian assembly' (T. 81).

33. 32. **Lord Mansfield.** See above on 23. 29; and B. 285-7 for other sensible Scotch critics. 'I found his *Journey* the common topic of conversation in London ... Lord Mansfield addressed me: "We have all been reading your travels, Mr. Boswell." I answered that I was but the humble attendant of Dr. Johnson. The Chief Justice replied, with that air and manner which none who ever saw and heard him can forget: "He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian"' (B. 291). He did not obtain his title as first Earl of Mansfield till a year later (1776).

33. 34. **a little unpalatable truth.** See on 11. 13 for Scotch susceptibility. Long before his Scotch tour Johnson had 'drawn' what Boswell calls 'the obstinate and sulky rationality' of 'shallow and irritable North Britons' by his, mostly half-humorous, criticisms and definitions. The definition of *oats* that he gave in his *Dictionary* was one; and he confessed that by this jest he 'meant to vex them' (B. 590). The definition is: 'A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.' Instead of being irritated by such things, a wise Scot, Lord Elibank (according to Walter Scott), met Johnson's jest with a rather smart repartee: 'Quite true! and where will you find such men and such horses?' Some of Johnson's 'unpalatable truths' touched much more serious evils than the inclemency of climate and the bleakness of scenery; but it seems to have been his remarks, and his jokes, on the 'dolorous' scenery and its 'gloom of desolation,' on the noblest prospect in Scotland being the highroad to England, on the two trees of Angusshire, on the forests which he mistook for heather, on the value of his lost oak-stick in a region so destitute of timber, and so on, that specially roused the ire of his assailants. Johnson's jests on the subject of trees proved very useful to Scotland in the end, for to them is to be ascribed (says Sir Walter Scott) the love of planting, 'which has become almost a passion.' On one occasion (T. 222) Johnson wisely advised the *sowing* of hardy trees in a garden where the poor things never could show their heads above the wall without being blasted. The country was very much more destitute of trees in Johnson's time than it is now. There is no longer perhaps so much point in Wilkes' remark that the boldest flight

of Shakespeare's genius was when he created a wood at Birnam (B. 380).

34. 2. newspapers... Boswell speaks of the 'miserable cavillings in newspapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications' (B. 287) and says: 'I brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his *Journey* was attacked in every mode, and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment' (B. 308). Boswell, as a Scotchman, would, he says, have 'felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to his native country,' so that his contempt of what is ridiculous in Scotch susceptibility is worth notice.

34. 4. five-shilling books. 'This fellow must be a blockhead,' said Johnson of one of his assailants. 'Who will read a five-shilling book against me? No, Sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets' (B. 287). See on 34. 31.

34. 9. Fingal. See my edition of Boswell's *Tour*, pp. 61, 114, 178, 299, etc., and notes to pp. 25 and 61; also B. 282-8. James Macpherson was a Scotch schoolmaster who in 1760 published what he asserted to be fragments of genuine *Ancient Poetry translated from the Gaelic or Erse*. The book attracted attention, and a subscription (to which Boswell and Hume, afterwards a strong disbeliever, contributed) enabled the author to prosecute his real or pretended researches. These resulted in the publication of *Fingal*, an epic in six books which he asserted to be a translation of an ancient Erse poem by Ossian, son of Fiona, an Irish warrior-bard, who is supposed to have lived about 280 A.D. In 1763 he published another of the same nature called *Temora*. It has been asserted, and Boswell seems to have believed it (see his letter, B. 282), that Macpherson really possessed original MSS. and was ready to show them; indeed, Carruthers, an editor of Boswell's *Tour*, asserts that the MSS. were actually left in a bookseller's shop for inspection during 'some months,' but 'nobody called to look at them.' If this be true, it is curious that they should have totally disappeared. The Highland Society took the matter in hand about a century ago, and the general opinion nowadays is that Macpherson may have interwoven a few fragments of old Erse poetry, but that these so-called Ossianic epics are mainly his own fabrication. If this be so, he must have had a good deal of ability, for many clever men (Goethe and Napoleon among them) have admired *Fingal*. Macaulay's 'trash' (*Essay* 43) is perhaps a little strong.

34. 13. contemptuous terms. Johnson's 'smashing retort' to Macpherson is couched in violent and defiant language, and lacks altogether the dignity and effectiveness of his letter to Lord Chesterfield. He calls him a cheat and a ruffian (B. 283). Probably Macpherson had used in his letters to Johnson, as

Boswell suspected, 'words of a nature very different from the language of literary contest.'

34. 14. **with a cudgel.** On another occasion (see on 16. 5), Johnson armed himself with an extra heavy oak-stick for Foote's benefit. An Englishman of my acquaintance had not long ago a similar experience. He had printed a set of perhaps rather too pungent verses on the aesthetic claims of 'Modern Athens,' expressing freely the feelings aroused by a prolonged stay in Auld Reekie after a visit to Italy. The thing was taken as a personal insult by some young Edinburgh club-loungers, and 'to his utter astonishment'—to use Boswell's expression—'he was warned that vengeance would be taken with a cane.' He, like Johnson, walked about during some time prepared for an encounter—but it never took place. I merely mention this to show that the susceptibility of some Scotch people (when in Scotland) to remarks which in no other country on earth would cause the slightest offence is by no means a thing of the past, and appears as utterly unintelligible still to the average Englishman as it appeared to Johnson and to Macaulay—who, by the way, was a Scotchman.

34. 31. **Kenrick.** He had already attacked Johnson's *Shakespeare*. See on 26. 28. Although Johnson ignored him, 'a young student of Oxford, of the name of Barclay, wrote an answer.' Johnson was at first angry that Kenrick's attack should have the credit of an answer. But afterwards, considering the young man's good intention, he kindly noticed him, and probably would have done more, but the young man died' (B. 171 and T. 205).

34. 31. **Campbells.** There are at least nineteen different Campbells mentioned by Boswell in his *Life and Tour*. Macaulay evidently means 'one Campbell, a Scotch purser in the navy,' who in 1767 published 'a ridicule of Johnson's style, under the title *Lexiphanes*' (B. 188). It was evidently a very silly parody of Johnson's sesquipedalian magniloquence. Dr. Hill gives a specimen *ad loc.*

34. 31. **MacNicol** (Rev. Donald, minister of Lismore, Argyle-shire) compiled the five-shilling book already noticed (33. 4, and for its title see on 33. 14). Boswell calls it a 'scurrilous volume, larger than Johnson's own, filled with insolent abuse' (B. 287). MacNicol was unknown, and Boswell evidently suspected that Macpherson was the author. The book appeared in 1779, and in 1817 it was 'reprinted at Glasgow together with Johnson's *Journey in one volume*' (H. 2. 308 n).

34. 32. **Henderson** is not, I think, mentioned by Boswell or Dr. Hill. Mr. Downie states, without giving his authority, that Andrew Henderson, a bookseller, published *Letters* inveighing against Johnson's 'Wicked and Opprobrious Invectives.'

34. 35. **One Scotchman** ... I cannot discover where Macaulay found this. The line means 'Greatest one, if you wish, I desire to contend with you.'

35. 11. 'Mr. Hanway wrote an angry answer to Johnson's review of his *Essay on Tea*, and Johnson, after a full and deliberate pause, made a reply to it; the only instance, I believe, in the whole course of his life, when he condescended to oppose anything that was written against him' (B. 104). In answer to Sir John Dalrymple, who complained of the attacks made on his *Memoirs*, Johnson (when in Edinburgh) said: 'It is advantageous to an author that his book should be attacked as well as praised. Fame is a shuttle-cock. If it be struck only at one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground' (T. 309). When in Skye (Oct. 1, 1773) he expatiated on the subject, and added: 'It was said to old Bentley, upon the attacks against him, "Why, they'll write you down." "No, Sir," he replied, "depend upon it, no man was ever written down but by himself"' (T. 206). Bentley's words are 'written out of reputation.' **Richard Bentley** (1662-1742) was a great scholar, who by his editions of the classics and his critical work obtained an European celebrity. A work of more questionable value was his edition of the *Paradise* of Milton, in which he altered a great deal into what he thought Milton meant to write, or ought to have written.

35. 27. **two or three tracts**. See on 27. 5.

35. 30. **John Almon**, b. at Liverpool about 1738, came to London 1758, and set up a printing establishment which was much used by the Opposition. In 1763 he was induced by the leaders of this political party to set up as bookseller (*i.e.* publishing bookseller) in Piccadilly. He published and sold political books and pamphlets. He gave up business in 1781 and died in 1805, after having lost all his money in the *General Advertiser*, and after having been frequently fined (once for reprinting the celebrated letter of 'Junius' to the king), and having been both imprisoned and outlawed (*Encycl. Brit.*). **Stockdale** was an employé of Almon's, and set up as bookseller. In 1789 Erskine successfully defended Stockdale, who was charged with seditious libel for having published a pamphlet in favour of Warren Hastings while the trial was in process.

35. 31. **Taxation no Tyranny**: *an answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress*. The pamphlet vehemently advocates the right of the Government to impose taxes on the colonies. It was written in 1775, and appeared anonymously as a kind of official retort to Burke's *American Conciliation*. Two years previously had occurred the affair of the tea-ships at Boston, and in 1774 Congress assembled at Philadelphia and issued its 'Resolutions.' (The Declaration of Independence was

on 4th July, 1776, and England recognised it in 1782.) The pamphlet is well criticised by Boswell (B. 289), who wisely 'avoided to talk with Johnson' on the subject. It was doubtless written, as Boswell says, 'at the desire of those who were then in power'—if indeed Lord North, or anyone except King George himself, can be said to have been 'in power' at that time. Not only is it 'unfortunate' in its 'positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule'—which in awkwardness reminds one of the elephantine pleasantry of some of Milton's Latin pamphlets—but the blindness and immorality of the thing are perfectly astounding, and all the more so when we remember the enlightened views that he had proclaimed on the subject of Falkland's Islands and on the slave trade. As Boswell remarks, the pamphlet was 'congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time,' and doubtless to some small extent contributed to that Ate-like infatuation which lost us our American colonies. A short time after the appearance of this unfortunate tract Lord North proposed to the Oxford authorities that they should confer on Johnson the degree of Civil Law (D.C.L.), which was readily done—Johnson's political acumen of course being highly appreciated in this quarter.

36. 22. **Richard Wilson**, born (1714) at Penegoes, Montgomeryshire, studied for six years in Italy, where he formed his style mainly after the works of Claude Lorrain and Poussin. His views of Rome and the Campagna are well known to all lovers of art. Some of his pictures remind one of Canaletto, but have too much 'English atmosphere,' if I remember right. He was one of the original members of the Royal Academy (1768). He suffered severely from neglect and poverty until 1776 (the year after *Taxation no Tyranny*), when he was made librarian to the Academy. A little later he inherited a small property in Denbighshire, to which he retired. There are about ten fine 'Wilsons' in the National Gallery.

36. 28. **some scruples.** See on 5. 19 for his feelings on the subject of Easter. In his *Prayers and Meditations* he notes: 'May 29, Easter Eve. I treated with booksellers on a bargain'; and he adds apologetically: 'but the time was not long.'

36. 31. **from Cowley downwards.** Cowley stands first in the *Lives*, but in regard to date of birth Milton and Waller were earlier. I see that in Dilby's letter to Boswell it is stated that, in order to hold the market against a 'little trifling edition of *The Poets*' published in Edinburgh, a number of London booksellers were induced to 'print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from *Chaucer to the present time*' (B. 395). Perhaps *Chaucer* is a misprint, or due to Boswell's transcription; or perhaps the original plan was modified. Dilby speaks of the 'list of the Poets which

we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne.' (In 1774 the claim of authors and publishers to 'perpetual copyright' had been upset by the House of Lords, who grounded their decision on 'the statute of the 8th of Queen Anne,' by which an author could only assign a copyright for 14 years and retain it afterwards for 14 more years.) Among these later poets, who would be within the time of the Act, was of course Goldsmith; and Macaulay, in his life of Goldsmith, has explained that Goldsmith was not included because the list of poets provided by Dilby 'ended with Lyttleton, who died in 1773.' Malone, however, states (see B. 397*n*) that Goldsmith's poems were to have been included, but had to be omitted 'in consequence of some petty exclusive interest in some of them vested in Mr. Carnan, a bookseller.'

36. 33. the task. For Johnson's *Lives* see B. 394, 405, 539-51. Boswell was 'somewhat disappointed in finding that... it was not an undertaking directed by him,' and Johnson himself seemed 'not much to relish' the idea of being merely employed to do a specified job. The idea of an English literary biography had been suggested to Johnson ten years earlier by the king. See on 27. 3.

37. 4. Walmesley. See on 5. 32.

37. 5. Button: evidently a misprint for **Button's**. Cf. *Essays* (pop. edn.). 'Addison had made a rival translation; ... Tickell had consented to father it, and the wits of Button's had united to puff it.' Button's was one of the many coffee-houses and gathering places of wits (cf. Will's, Child's, etc., *Essays*, 728). It was in Covent Garden, and was mostly frequented by Addison's following. Button, the proprietor, had been Addison's valet. In *Esmond* (iv. 5) Thackeray makes his hero say, 'The famous Mr. Congreve I saw dozens of times at Button's—a splendid wreck of a man.' In a letter Pope describes Tickell as 'the humblest slave among Addison's followers at Button's'; and in his lines to Dr. Moore, the inventor of a worm-powder, Pope says:

'E'en Button's wits to worms shall turn.'

37. 5. Colley Cibber, son of an Holstein sculptor (the sculptor of the bas-relief on the Monument), began as an actor. He then took to writing and adapting plays—in which he had great success. In 1730 he was made Poet Laureate. He continued writing and acting till a very old man, and died at the age of 86. His adaptations held the stage for a considerable time. He 'mutilated the plays' of Molière, Corneille, Shakespeare, Dryden, etc. Pope was very hostile to him, and ridiculed him in the *Dunciad*. For Johnson's dealings with Cibber see B. 380, 425, and for his scornful epigram on Cibber as a fit poet laureate for George II. see B. 47,

37. 7. **Lord Orrery** (the fifth Earl of Orrery) is mentioned several times by Boswell as an acquaintance of Johnson's (T. 176, where Boswell wrongly calls him the 'third Lord Orrery'). He was intimate with Swift, and, after his death, published highly depreciatory *Remarks* on his life and writings (in the form of letters to his own son).

37. 10. **with a mind full.** 'His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that... he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper' (B. 539).

37. 11. **a paragraph.** In a letter to Boswell Johnson says: 'I am engaged to write little *Lives* and little Prefaces to a little edition of the English Poets' (B. 394). In the *Advertisement* of the book he says: 'My purpose was only to have allotted to every poet an advertisement like those which we find in the French miscellanies, containing a few dates and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention' (B. 539 n).

37. 13. **The work...** In a letter to Boswell (B. 501) Johnson speaks of the first four volumes of the *Lives* and also of 'a set both of the *Lives* and Poets.' But, if the Poets themselves were not in this ten-volumed edition, why are we told that Johnson's part of it was republished separately soon afterwards, when 'for a very few corrections he was presented with another hundred guineas' (B. 540 n)? An eight-volumed edition was published in 1804, and one of six volumes (by Waugh) in 1896. The Oxford press is now printing one by the late Dr. Hill. Besides the poets specified by the publishers Johnson added Blackmore, Dr. Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

37. 21. **The criticisms...** 'Even on poetry Johnson's utterances are valuable, because they are the utterances of a great and original man,' says Matthew Arnold in his edition of six of Johnson's *Lives*. He regards Johnson and all other of the greater English writers of that period (including Dryden, Addison, and Pope) as 'having a special task committed to them—the establishment of English prose.' None of them, except perhaps Young, Goldsmith and Gray (and perhaps we should add Thomson, though he was rather a precursor of the coming age of a new poetry) had any claim to the name of poet, nor the faintest suspicion of what was great in poetry. The *Lives* merit all the praise that Macaulay gives them. Johnson's criticisms 'always mean something'; they are 'never silly.' They claim interest and respect for their robust common sense and sincerity. To take one of many examples:—his utter want of a sense for what is great and beautiful in poetry is proved by his astounding remarks on *Lycidas*; but nevertheless, these remarks are by no means 'silly'—they

have a strong self-supporting quality, and are helpful in their way. But what are we to say to this ridiculous list of 'the most Eminent of the English Poets'—as they were called (B. 500) in the Advertisement? There is one really great poet (Milton) among them, and two or three others who are indubitably poets, and some clever versemakers, such as Pope and Butler, but more than half of these 53 most Eminent English Poets are scarcely known even by name to anyone any longer but literary scavengers. They are, as Macaulay expresses it, 'gathered to Bavius and Blackmore' (*Life*, p. 619).

38. 10. **Gray.** The incompetence of Johnson as a judge of poetry is perhaps even more glaringly evident in the *Life* of Gray than in that of Milton. Johnson had no more suspicion that Gray was a true poet than that he himself was not. He called him 'a dull fellow—dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him *great*. He was a mechanical poet.' 'There are,' he said, 'only two good stanzas in Gray's poetry' (B. 294). 'I do not think,' he said, 'Gray a first-rate poet' (B. 136).

38. 14. **Malone...** 'Had he asked a thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it. They have probably got five thousand guineas by this work in the course of 25 years' (B. 395 *n*). This note is one of those appended by Malone to one of his editions of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Edmond Malone (1741-1812) is chiefly famous for his edition of Shakespeare (1790). He was shown by Boswell's son 'at Mr. Baldwin's printing house a sheet of the *Tour* which contained Johnson's character, and requested to be introduced to its writer.' Boswell forthwith dedicated the *Tour* to his new acquaintance. Malone remained a friend to the family after Boswell's death. He edited the third (1799), fourth (1804), fifth (1807), and sixth (1811) editions of the *Life*, Boswell having died while preparing notes for the third.

38. 18. **The booksellers...** This is copied almost literally from Boswell (540). Johnson asserted that 'booksellers were a generous set of men; nor in the present instance have I reason to complain. The fact is not that they have paid me too little, but that I have written too much' (B. 540 *n*). Whether this extra hundred was identical with the extra hundred that I mentioned above (37. 13) I do not know.

38. 27. **Robertson.** In a letter to Temple, in 1768, Boswell says: 'Dr. Robertson is come up laden with his Charles V.—three large quartos; he has been offered three thousand guineas for it' (H. 2. 63 *n*). Where Macaulay found £4500 as the price

received I do not know. He was a little weak at mathematics, so possibly he may have worked out 3000 guineas at this sum instead of £3150. Robertson himself said that he sold his early work, the *History of Scotland*, at a 'moderate price' (apparently about £500 for the first edition), and that as the publishers made £6000 by the book, he afterwards received much higher prices (B. 485).

38. 31. *less amusing*. Compare what Macaulay says of Rousseau: 'I cannot deny that he had great eloquence and great vigour of mind. At the same time he does not amuse me, and to me a book which is not *amusing* wants the highest of recommendations.' And of his own *History* he said: 'I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies.'

39. 3. *the strange dependents*... Levett died in 1782 (B. 580), and Mrs. Williams in 1783. Mrs. Desmoulins went away (B. 615). Johnson writes in 1783 that he lives now 'in a melancholy way.'

39. 7. *Thrale was no more*. He died in April, 1781 (B. 559).

39. 14. *The control*... 'Sir, she has done everything wrong since Thrale's bridle was off her neck' (B. 631).

39. 23. *music-master from Brescia*: Signor Piozzi. Any unbiassed reader of the facts given by Boswell and others, and of Johnson's comments and conduct, can hardly fail to find Macaulay's account of this affair both unfair and hysterical. It is with him merely a matter of rhetorical contrast—lurid colouring and opaque shadow. Piozzi is described by the poet Samuel Rogers, in his *Table Talk*, as 'a very handsome, gentlemanly, and amiable person,' and the marriage seems to have been a success, and to have been finally approved by most of her friends. Even Boswell, who was jealous of Mrs. Thrale's influence with Johnson, and is for ever making side hits at her ('ill-bred,' 'inaccurate,' 'light,' etc.), has himself nothing to say against Piozzi, nor about the indecency of her 'degrading passion.' Indeed, the only person who seems to have taken the view that Macaulay takes was the Italian Baretto, who evidently had personal motives (see H. 3. 48 *n*). Doubtless when Mrs. Thrale began to be conscious of what was coming, she felt that she would have to break with Johnson, knowing his opinion of foreigners and fiddlers (see his *London*), and knowing also his sentimental attachment to her, and his jealous masterful character. But there is no sign whatever of any such 'struggle' as that which Macaulay describes, although one can easily understand that she became a little *distracte* and petulant under

Johnson's jealous supervision, as Frances Burney has described her at that crisis. And what must have added to the awkwardness of the situation was the fact that 'Johnson's wishing to unite himself to this rich widow was much talked of,' and that some wag had published an *Ode to Mrs. Thrale by Samuel Johnson, LL.D., on their supposed approaching Nuptials*. But in spite of all this, Mrs. Thrale kept her head, and would have willingly kept Johnson's friendship, though in her *Anecdotes* she confesses it had become 'irksome' to her, had he not broken with her. Considering his very insulting language, it is certainly much to her credit that she not only deigned to write him a letter full of quiet dignity, but (as she told Frances Burney shortly before his death) still regarded him as the best and wisest of men, and kept his picture in her room and his works on her chimney-piece.¹ When the matter was no longer to be concealed from Johnson (she had already confided it to Frances Burney and a few intimate friends), she wrote to tell him that 'what she supposed he never believed, was true.' His anger and contempt were unbounded. It will be enough to cite two examples, which evidently inspired Macaulay's remarks. 'Poor Thrale!' he exclaimed. 'I thought that either her virtue or her vice would have restrained her from such a marriage. She is now become a subject for her enemies to exult over, and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget or pity.' The other example is the furious letter (not given by Boswell but by Mrs. Piozzi) that he wrote on hearing the news. 'Madam, if I interpret your letter rightly, you are ignominiously married. If it is yet undone, let us once more talk together. If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive you! If you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief!...' Mrs. Piozzi's reply, in which she spoke of her husband with pride, and repelled with dignity Johnson's insulting attack on her 'fame,' seems to have made some impression, for Johnson wrote again, this time in a rather abject state of mind, and admitted that he had no right to resent her conduct. After this all intercourse seems to have ceased. It should be noticed, perhaps, that at her second marriage Mrs. Piozzi was 42 years of age, and that she had borne twelve children to her former husband, of whom three only were now living.

39. 32. when he left Streatham. Macaulay, following Boswell (587)—who probably did know—does not seem to have known that Mrs. Thrale left it at the same time (Oct. 1782), and therefore could not well have 'pressed Johnson to return.' The house had been let to Lord Shelborne (Prime Minister in 1782-3),

¹ It was almost at the same time—only a fortnight before his death—that when Frances Burney asked him if he ever heard from Mrs. Piozzi, he answered fiercely that he had driven her entirely out of his mind, had burnt all her letters, and desired 'never to hear of her more.'

and the brewery sold to Barclay & Perkins (see note to 30. 16, and H. 4. 158 *n*). The date of Johnson's pathetic farewell to Streatham was Oct. 6th, and by Oct. 28th he was staying with Mrs. Thrale and Frances Burney at Brighton. Here his behaviour was so insufferable ('Mrs. Thrale faring worse than anybody') that not only he grieved Miss Burney 'to see how greatly he made himself dreaded by all, and by many abhorred,' but his society was tabooed and his name omitted from invitations. Boswell says nothing about this visit to Brighton. He must have known about it, so one must infer that he (like Macaulay) took a prejudiced view of the question. But he allows that a few months later—in March, 1783—Johnson was staying at Mrs. Thrale's house in Argyll Street, and that she seemed so 'attentive and kind,' that he 'imagined all to be as well as formerly.' This was, he it noticed, five months after the tragic withdrawal of Johnson from Streatham into the gloomy and desolate purlieu of Bolt Court so vividly described by Macaulay. It was not till some eighteen months later (July, 1784) that he heard of the marriage and wrote the angry letter which put an end to his friendship with Mrs. Piozzi.

40. 1. **Greek Testament.** In Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations* (published by Mr. Strahan: see 5. 19) from which Boswell takes the prayer here mentioned (B. 587) occurs this passage: 'I was called early. I packed my bundles and used the foregoing prayer with my morning devotions, somewhat, I think, enlarged. Being earlier than the family, I read St. Paul's farewell in the *Acts* (chapter xx.) and then read fortuitously in the gospels, which was my parting use of the library.' There is no mention here, or in Boswell, of a Greek Testament, but it was Johnson's habit to use his 'large folio Greek Testament' (see B. 242).

40. 13. **a complication of diseases.** Although he recovered from the stroke of palsy in 1783 he was soon after 'threatened with a surgical operation,' and afflicted with gout (B. 617) and spasmodic asthma (B. 623), and during the first part of 1784 he was confined by illness for 129 days (H. 4. 270 *n*).

40. 18. **the Ephesian matron** was a character who apparently enjoyed in early times considerable celebrity in the East. Her story is told by Petronius, a writer who supplied Nero's court with piquant literature, and was given the title *Arbiter elegantiae* (i.e. imperial director-in-chief of elegant amusements). It is referred to by various English authors (Addison and Cibber among them), but the best known version is by La Fontaine. According to his version there was a lady of Ephesus, famed far and wide for her virtue, wisdom, and beauty, who lost her husband. In despair she (joined by her female slave) shuts herself up in his tomb, intending to starve herself to death.

Now near by the tomb is a soldier keeping guard over the dead body of a thief that is hanging on a gibbet (or cross). This soldier discovers the two women—persuades them to share his supper, and wins the love of the inconsolable matron. Meanwhile the dead body of the thief has been stolen, and the matron saves the soldier's life by letting him substitute the dead body of her dead husband. It is a very disagreeable story, and one wonders at its former popularity. Curiously enough in the Apocalypse the Church of Ephesus is reproached for having 'left her first love' (*Rev.* ii. 4). For the **two pictures** see *Hamlet*, iii. 4. The truth seems to be that the ridicule was mostly directed against Johnson, whose wish to 'unite himself with the rich widow was much talked about, although (says Boswell) I believe without foundation.' The public were too indifferent, or possibly too sensible, to laugh or hiss at the rich widow for marrying an 'Italian fiddler.' The marriage took place on 25th July, 1784.

40. 19. **vehemently said**... See on 39. 23, *footnote*.

40. 25. **at Milan**. After remaining some time in Italy, where she seems to have been welcomed into literary society, Mrs. Piozzi returned with her husband to England, where her daughters and other relatives, except the Thrale family, seem to have accepted the *fait accompli*. They lived in a villa in Wales. Here Piozzi died in 1809. She survived Johnson about thirty-six years and her husband about twelve, and died in her eighty-second year (1821) at Clifton.

40. 30. **fine but gloomy paper**: *i.e.* *The Horror of the Last* (B. 110). The following is a passage from it. 'There are few things, not purely evil, of which we can say without some emotion of unhappiness: *This is the last*... This secret horror of the last is inseparable from a thinking being whose life is limited, and to whom death is dreadful.' For Johnson's horror at the thought of death, see on 5. 15.

40. 36. **about two thousand pounds**. See his will (B. 681), according to which he left the value of about £2600 in cash (including £750 that he had lent to Langton) in trust, mainly for his negro servant, Francis Barber.

41. 2. **this hoard**. 'The money he had saved proved to be more than his friends imagined, or than, I believe, he himself, in his carelessness concerning worldly matters, knew it to be' (B. 652).

41. 4. **Some of his friends**. 'The scheme was brought to a serious resolution at General Paoli's, where I had often talked of it' (B. 651). Boswell then, after consultation with Sir Joshua Reynolds, wrote to Lord Chancellor Thurlow. After a short delay—for the Chancellor put Boswell's letter in his pocket and

forgot it—an encouraging answer was received. Feeling confident of a successful issue, Sir Joshua and Boswell determined to break the news to Johnson. This delicate task was undertaken by Boswell, not without trepidation. The scene that follows deserves transcription, for it gives us a glimpse of Johnson's real nature. 'BOSWELL: I am very anxious about you, Sir, and particularly that you should go to Italy for the winter, which I believe is your own wish. JOHNSON: It is, Sir. BOSWELL: You have no objection, I presume, but the money it would require. JOHNSON: Why no, Sir.—Upon which I gave him a particular account of what had been done, and read to him the Lord Chancellor's letter. He listened with much attention; then warmly said: "This is taking prodigious pains about a man."—"O, Sir," said I with most sincere affection, "your friends would do everything for you." He paused—grew more and more agitated—till tears started into his eyes, and he exclaimed with fervent emotion, "God bless you all!" I was so affected that I also shed tears. After a short time he renewed and extended his benediction: "God bless you all, for Jesus Christ's sake!"—We both remained for some time unable to speak. He rose suddenly and quitted the room, quite melted in tenderness. He stayed but a short time, till he had recovered his firmness. Soon after he returned I left him... I never was again under that roof which I had so long revered' (B. 655).

So sanguine were his friends that they discussed and settled plans with Johnson. Boswell then left for Scotland. After about two months, the Chancellor called on Sir Joshua and informed him that the application had failed. (Whether the refusal was due to the king, or to Pitt, or whether the application ever reached either of them, remains a mystery.) Lord Thurlow at the same time offered to advance £600; but this offer was refused, with expressions of deep gratitude, by Johnson, whose desire to leave England seems by this time to have decreased very considerably in intensity (see his letter, B. 660). Indeed it is very clear that his first enthusiasm was of brief duration. On several occasions he asserted that if he became worse he would not leave doctors and home-comforts, and if he got better there would be no occasion for him to go; and to Lord Thurlow he asserted that 'the journey to the continent was never much encouraged by the physicians.' Had it been his strong wish, or had it been strongly urged by his friends and his doctors, the means would have been forthcoming. As it was, one of them (Dr. Brocklesby) offered him £100 a year for the rest of his life. (One naturally asks why Boswell, who was now laird of Auchinleck, made no such offer.) These facts afford an interesting commentary on the following bit of vivid colouring. 'Scarcely had Pitt obtained possession of unbounded power when an aged writer of the highest eminence, who had made

very little by his writings, and who was sinking into the grave under a load of infirmities and sorrows, wanted five or six hundred pounds to enable him, during the winter or two which might still remain to him, to draw his breath more easily in the soft climate of Italy. Not a farthing was to be obtained, and before Christmas the author of the *English Dictionary* and the *Lives of the Poets* had gasped his last in the river fog and coal-smoke of Fleet Street' (Macaulay's *Writings and Speeches*, p. 413, quoted by Dr. Hill).

41. 14. **The ablest physicians.** The names of four doctors and a surgeon are given by Boswell, who adds that they all attended Johnson without accepting any fees (B. 680). Dr. Hill *ad loc.* gives a long note on Johnson's courage in regard to pain and his terror in regard to death.

41. 16. **William Windham** (1750-1810). In 1783, the year before Johnson's death, he had been in Ireland as secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, but ill-health compelled him to return. In 1784 he was returned as M.P. for Norwich, a seat which he retained till 1802. After the outbreak of the French Revolution he joined Pitt and was made Secretary of War, and was among those who retired from office in 1801. He declined a place in Pitt's new cabinet of 1802, and on Pitt's death in 1806 he accepted the seals as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in the ministry of 'All the Talents' formed by Lord Grenville. After Fox's death he was offered a peerage, but declined the honour. 'His *Diary* was edited in 1866. The passages in this work relating to Dr. Johnson's declining days have been of considerable use to the later editors of Boswell' (*Encycl. Brit.*). Windham is a figure in the celebrated picture given by Macaulay of the trial of Warren Hastings. He was one of the managers of the prosecution—those 'conductors of the impeachment' who were headed by Burke (Pitt having refused to appear). 'There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham' (*Essays*, p. 659). For his attention to Johnson in his last illness see B. 685.

41. 18. **Frances Burney** (afterwards Madame D'Arblay), the celebrated novelist. The student should read Macaulay's Essay on her. Her father, Dr. Burney (Doctor of Music), was an old friend of Johnson's, and one of those who visited him during the last days. In Madame D'Arblay's *Diary* we find that on December 11th her father was with Johnson, who asked after his dear Fanny, and hoped that she had not taken it amiss that he did not feel able to see her, as he was 'very bad.' On December 12th, the last day of his life, she called at his rooms, but did not

dare to enter. She saw Mr. Langton, who said that Johnson was 'going on to death very fast' (H. 4, Appendix E.).

41. 20. **Langton.** See on 28. 22. He was not present at Johnson's death. The negro, Barber, and Mrs. Desmoulins seem to have been the only persons present (B. 687). Croker gives a letter written by Langton from Johnson's room, saying that when he had arrived at eight in the evening he found that Johnson had breathed his last about three-quarters of an hour before. As Johnson's confessor, Langton received once a rebuff. 'What is your drift, Sir?' exclaimed Johnson in a loud and angry tone, when Langton began to urge the necessity of Christian charity in rather too pointed a manner. And this too was after having been begged by Johnson to 'tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty' (B. 632 and *note*).

41. 25. **His temper** ... Frances Burney says: 'I hear from everyone he is now perfectly resigned to his approaching fate, and no longer in terror of death' (*Diary*, Dec. 10th, 1784). Boswell's brother, who was in London at the time, gave a similar report: 'The Doctor, from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned, was seldom or never fretful or out of temper ...' (B. 687). Sir J. Reynolds says: 'During his last illness, when all hope was at an end, he appeared to be quieter and more resigned.' These various accounts all go to confute the most unpleasant suspicion, which is more than hinted at by Hawkins and Murphy, and which even Langton seems to have entertained, that in his terror of death Johnson during his very last hours inflicted such serious wounds on himself, in the hope of relieving the accumulation of dropsical humours, that he hastened his end. Dr. Hill, rather inconsequently, remarks: 'Langton must have suspected that Johnson *intentionally* shortened his life' (see also B. 680*n*).

41. 30. **in Westminster Abbey.** Compare: 'He rests with his peers in Poets' Corner, near the west wall of the South Transept. There, amidst the tombs of Johnson, and Garrick, and Handel, and Goldsmith, and Gay, stands conspicuous the statue of Addison; and at the feet of Addison lies the stone which bears this inscription: Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay' (*Trevelyan*).

42. 3. **the celebrity of the writings.** Compare: 'The reputation of these writings, which he probably expected to be immortal, is every day fading, while those peculiarities and that careless table-talk, the memory of which he probably thought would die with him, are likely to be remembered as long as the English language is spoken in any quarter of the globe' (*Essay*, 52). Carlyle says that all Johnson's writings 'stand on quite an inferior level to Boswell's book, and ... for some future generation may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and expository scholia to this Johnsoniad of Boswell.' See on 29. 3,

42. 9. **The old philosopher** ... Besides Boswell, Macaulay, Croker, Hill, and many other literary men who have helped to preserve the memory of Johnson's personality, we should not forget what Boswell calls the 'extraordinary zeal of the artists to extend and perpetuate his image.' Boswell gives a list of all the portraits of Johnson known to him, and as Dr. Hill has not supplemented this list, I suppose it may be considered as complete (B. 688 n). Dr. Hill gives reproductions of three portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and of the mezzotinto of the (perhaps never finished) portrait by Opie, taken in 1783.

42. 14. **seventy years**. When Macaulay wrote his *Essay on Boswell's Johnson* (1831) Johnson had not been dead fifty years. The present *Life* was written in or about 1856. It brings Johnson and his age vividly near to us when we glance at some such Chronological Summary as that which I give on p. 130, and notice that when Johnson died Wordsworth was a boy of fourteen, and remember that Wordsworth was still living when some of us were children. And Johnson was 'touched' by Queen Anne!

42. 16. **anfractuosities**: *i.e.* twists, odd peculiarities. 'Sir, among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture' (B. 527). In his *Dictionary* Johnson defines *Anfractuosity* as 'Fulness of windings and turnings.' He does not give *anfractuosity*, which is anyhow regularly formed, and not a hybrid, like the former word. *Anfractus* in Latin is literally a break or bend—hence a curve or winding, a circuitous route, etc. *Anfractuosis*, 'full of turns,' is also found in late Latin writers.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY I.

JOHNSON'S LIFE.

- 1709, Sept. 18. Born (at Lichfield).
1712. Taken to London to be 'touched' by Queen Anne.
1712 (?). 'Insists' on being taken to hear Dr. Sacheverell preach
in Lichfield Cathedral.
1720-25 (about). At Lichfield School.
1725-6. At Stourbridge School.
1726-8. 'Irregularly educating himself' at home.
1728. Enters Pembroke College, Oxford (31st October).
Translation of Pope's Messiah.
1729. Ceases to reside at Oxford (Dec.).
1730-31. Occasionally at Oxford.
1731. His father dies. At Lichfield 'unemployed'.
1732. Usher at Market Bosworth.
1733. At Birmingham.
Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinnia (translated).
1734. At Lichfield. Proposes to edit *Politian*.
Again at Birmingham.
1735. Marries Mrs. Porter. Sets up an 'academy' at Edial,
near Lichfield.
1737. Visits London with Garrick (March), taking with him
3 acts of *Irene*. Works at it at Greenwich. Finishes
it on return to Lichfield (June). Removes to London
(Sept.).
His brother Nathanael dies.
1738. Writes for *Gentleman's Magazine* (March).
Publishes *London* (May).
1739. Vainly tries, with Pope's help, to procure an M.A.
degree. He is thus unable to accept the mastership
of Appleby School, near Lichfield.
1739-43. Writes *Debates*, etc., for *Gent. Magazine*, and a *Cata-*
logue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford (*Harleian*
Library).

- 1739-43. Leads a life of great privation and drudgery. Consorts with Boyse, Hoole, Psalmanazar, and Savage.
1744. *Life of Savage.*
1745. *Observations on Macbeth.* (Together with this, twice advertised in the *Gent. Mag.* 'proposals for a new edition of Shakespeare.')
Beginning to sketch outlines of his *Dictionary.*
1747. *Prologue on the opening of Drury Lane Theatre.*
Signs contract with a syndicate of eminent booksellers for compilation of *Dictionary.* Addresses the *Plan (Prospectus)* to the Earl of Chesterfield. Works at the *Dictionary* for the next eight years (1747-55).
1749. *Vanity of Human Wishes.*
Irene acted nine times (February).
Founds the Ivy Lane Club.
1750. Begins *Rambler.*
Prologue for the representation of *Comus*, acted for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter.
1752. Ends *Rambler* (March 14).
His wife dies (March 17).
Makes acquaintance with Reynolds.
Miss Williams begins to reside with him.
1753. Writes for the *Adventurer.*
1754. Visits Oxford.
1755. Receives degree of M.A. 'by diploma' from Oxford.
Letter to Lord Chesterfield.
Publishes *Dictionary.*
Plans editing a *Bibliothèque*, i.e. a *Review* 'foreign as well as domestic.'
1756. Abridgment of *Dictionary.*
Twice arrested for debt.
Contributes as editor to *Literary Magazine.*
Proposals for an edition of Shakespeare.
1758. Begins the *Idler.*
1759. Death of his mother.
Rasselas.
Visits Oxford.
1760. Ends the *Idler.*
1761. Visits Lichfield.
1762. Accepts pension of £300 a year.
1763. Boswell is introduced to him (16th May).
He accompanies Boswell to Harwich.
Visits Oxford.
1764. The Literary Club founded.
(Boswell in Holland, Italy, and Corsica.)
1765. Visits Cambridge.
Made Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) by Trinity College, Dublin.
Gets to know the Thrales (or 1764?)

1765. Publishes his *Shakespeare* (Oct).
 Seriously ill.
 (Boswell returns to London from abroad.)
1766. Johnson invited by Thrales to Streatham, where he
 spends over three months.
 Visits Oxford.
1767. Interview with King George III.
 Spends about six months at Lichfield.
1768. Prologue to Goldsmith's *Goodnatured Man*.
 Visits Oxford.
1769. Appointed Professor in Ancient Literature to the newly
 instituted Royal Academy of Arts.
 (Goldsmith at same time Professor in Ancient History.)
 At Oxford, Lichfield, and Brighton.
 (Boswell at the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford.)
- 1770-72. *The False Alarm* and *Falkland's Islands*.
 Revises *Dictionary*. Visits Lichfield yearly.
1773. Fourth edition of *Dictionary*.
 Tour to the Hebrides with Boswell (Aug.-Nov.).
 Begins his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.
1774. Death of Goldsmith (4th April).
 Tour in North Wales.
1775. *Journey to Western Islands* published.
Taxation no Tyranny.
 Made Doctor in Jure Civili (D.C.L.) by Oxford
 University.
 In France with the Thrales.
1776. Visits Oxford and Lichfield with Boswell.
 Proposed tour to Italy given up.
 Visits Bath and Brighton.
 Boswell inveigles him into meeting Wilkes.
1777. Undertakes to write *The Lives of the Poets*.
1779. The first four volumes of the *Lives*.
 Death of Garrick.
 Visits Lichfield.
1780. Death of Beauclerk.
 Visits Brighton.
1781. The last six volumes of the *Lives*.
 Death of Mr. Thrale.
 Visits Oxford, Lichfield, Birmingham.
1782. Death of Dr. Levett (Jan.).
 Takes leave of Streatham.
 At Brighton with Mrs. Thrale and Frances Burney.
1783. Has paralytic stroke.
 Death of Mrs. Williams (Sept.).
 Attacked by asthma and dropsy.
1784. Confined by illness for 129 days, but recovers so far as to
 visit Oxford with Boswell.

1784. Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds vainly try to obtain grant from Government to enable Johnson to pass the winter in Italy.
 Johnson hears of Mrs. Thrale's intention to marry Piozzi.
 Makes a 'last jaunt' to Lichfield, Birmingham, and Oxford.
 Dies (13th Dec.).

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY. II.

JOHNSON'S CHIEF LITERARY CONTEMPORARIES.

Defoe, - - -	1663-1731	Burke, - - -	1730-1797
Swift, - - -	1667-1745	Cowper, - - -	1731-1800
Addison, - -	1672-1719	Gibbon, - - -	1737-1794
Young, - - -	1684-1765	Boswell, - - -	1740-1795
Pope, - - -	1688-1744	Goethe, - - -	1749-1806
Richardson, -	1689-1761	Frances Burney, -	1752-1840
Voltaire, - -	1694-1778	Crabbe, - - -	1754-1832
Thomson, - -	1700-1748	Burns, - - -	1759-1796
Fielding, - -	1707-1754	Schiller, - - -	1759-1805
Hume, - - -	1711-1776	Rogers, - - -	1763-1855
Rousseau, - -	1712-1778	Wordsworth, - -	1770-1850
Gray, - - -	1716-1771	Scott, - - -	1771-1832
Smollett, - -	1721-1771	Coleridge, - - -	1772-1834
Adam Smith, -	1723-1790	Southey, - - -	1774-1843
Goldsmith, - -	1728-1774	Walter Savage	
Bishop Percy, -	1728-1811	Landor, - - -	1775-1864
Lessing, - - -	1729-1781		

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY. III.

MACAULAY'S LIFE.

1800. Thomas Babington, son of Zachary Macaulay and Elisabeth (*nee* Selina Mills), born, Oct. 25th, at the Manor House, Rothley Temple, near Leicester, the residence of his uncle, Mr. Babington.
1812. Sent to private school at Little Shelford, near Cambridge. The school removed in 1814 to Aspenden Hall, near Buntingford. He remains under charge of Mr. Preston, the headmaster, until 1818. About 1816 was his first appearance in print—an anonymous letter sent to his father's *Christian Observer*, in which he scandalised the readers of that journal by eulogising Fielding and Smollett.
1818. Goes into residence at Trinity College, Cambridge.
- 1821-3. Gains a Craven Scholarship, Prize for Latin Declamation, and two Chancellor's medals for English verse. Is 'plucked' for the Mathematical Tripos, and thus prevented from competing for the Chancellor's medals for Classics—then the highest test of scholarship.
- 1823-4. Writes for Charles Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*: two battle-pieces in verse, *Ivry* and *Naseby*; the *Conversation between Cowley and Milton*; *Criticisms on Italian writers* (Dante, Petrarch), etc.
1824. His father fails in business. Macaulay takes pupils and determines to retrieve the loss, and to help his brothers and sisters. Elected Fellow of Trinity College. Is asked to write for the *Edinburgh Review* (founded 1802). Makes his first public speech before an Anti-slavery Meeting.
1825. His *Essay on Milton* excites a sensation in literary circles.
1826. Called to the bar, and joins the Northern circuit, but with no serious intention of adopting the law as his profession.
1827. *Essay on Machiavelli*.
1828. Is made a Commissioner of Bankruptcy under Wellington's administration—'a rare piece of luck' considering Macaulay's extreme anti-Toryism. He longs to be in Parliament, 'his heart and soul being filled' by the Repeal of the Test Act, the Emancipation of the Catholics, and other such questions. *Essays on Hallam's Const. Hist. and Dryden*.
1829. *Essays on James Mill*. The Catholic Emancipation Bill is proposed by the Duke, and becomes law.

1830. Offered by Lord Lansdowne a seat for the borough of Calne. Maiden speech in Parliament on Jewish Disabilities. Visits Paris. Essay on *Montgomery's Poems*.
1831. Invited to stand for Leeds. Essays on *Boswell's Johnson* and *Byron*.
1832. Speeches on the Reform Bill. Elected a Commissioner and then Secretary of the Board of Control. Member for Leeds in the Reformed Parliament.
1833. Essay on *Horace Walpole*. Elected Member of the Supreme Council of India.
1834. First Essay on *Chatham*. Arrives in India, with his sister Hannah, who soon after marries Mr. Trevelyan.
1835. President of Committee of Public Education (India). Essay on *Mackintosh's Revolution*.
1837. As President of Law Commission, drafts Penal Code. Papers on Education, Press, etc., and indefatigable study, especially of the Classics. Essay on *Bacon*.
1838. Returns to England. Essay on *Temple*. Plots his *History*. Tour in Italy. At Rome has the offer from Lord Melbourne of the Judge-Advocateship, which he declines.
1839. In London. Essay on *Gladstone*. M.P. for Edinburgh and Secretary of War.
1840. Essays on *Clive* and *von Ranke*. Settles in the 'Albany.'
- 1841-2. Essays on *Warren Hastings* and *Frederic the Great*. On dissolution of Parliament re-elected for Edinburgh. *Lays of Ancient Rome*.
1843. Essays republished. Essay on *Addison*. Trip to the Loire.
1844. In Holland. Second Essay on *Chatham*.
1846. Paymaster-General of the Army. Re-elected as Member for Edinburgh.
1847. Parliament again dissolved. Macaulay defeated at Edinburgh, and retires into private life, devoting himself to his *History*.
1848. Elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University. First two volumes of *History* published.
1852. Re-elected for Edinburgh. Serious illness. Visit to Edinburgh. Speaks his last words in the House of Commons.
1854. Draws up Report on Competitive Examinations. Resides in cottage at Ditton Marsh. D.C.L. Oxford. [During later years was member of Academies of Munich, Turin, and Utrecht; received Orders of Merit etc.; was President of various Philosophical and other Institutions, Trustee of British Museum, Professor of Ancient Literature to the Royal Academy etc. etc.]

1855. Third and fourth volumes of *History* published—the 'whole weight of the edition is 56 tons.'
1856. Failing health. Resigns his seat for Edinburgh. Settles at Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, where he has his 'little paradise of shrubs and turf.'
- 1855-8. Biographies of Johnson, Goldsmith, Bunyan, Atterbury, and Pitt in the *Encycl. Brit.*
1857. High Steward of the Borough of Cambridge. Created Baron Macaulay of Rothley.
1859. Visits English Lakes and Scotland. Seriously ill towards end of year. On Dec. 28, 'musters strength to dictate a letter to a poor curate enclosing twenty-five pounds,' and a few hours later dies.

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